Report
of
The Privacy Commissioner
on
the Use of the Social Insurance Number

Canada

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 FOREWORD

On 1 February, 1980, the Honourable Senator Jacques Flynn, the then Minister of Justice, announced that he had ordered a special study by the Privacy Commissioner to examine the extent of the use of the social insurance number and the implications of such use for the privacy of individuals.

The Privacy Commissioner was asked to examine the use of the number by provincial and municipal governments, by corporations and organizations in the private sector subject to the legislative authority of Parliament, and by institutions in the public sector that are under the legislative authority of Parliament, but not subject to Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

On 23 May, 1980, as a result of questions raised by several provincial governments, the Honourable Jean Chrétien, Minister of Justice, enlarged the scope of the study to include the use of the social insurance number in the federal government departments and institutions subject to the provisions of Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act, and extended the time-limit for providing a report on the study from 1 August to 1 November, 1980.

The terms of reference required the Privacy Commissioner to examine the extent to which the number is collected and used, the purposes for which it is used and whether it serves as a data-linkage device. The study was also required to examine what threats, if any, the use of the social insurance number represents to the privacy of individuals and the implications of possible regulation or prohibition of the collection and use of the number. (The terms of reference are reproduced as appendix A to this report.)

The Privacy Commissioner was authorized to receive and consider submissions and comments from any source, but had no authority and made no attempt to demand information or compel the production of evidence. It was stressed in all contacts with individuals, officials of governments, associations and businesses that their participation was appreciated but entirely voluntary. As a consequence, this study reflects the concerns that were voiced but cannot claim to be exhaustive or to be based on scientific

methodology or testing and no attempt was made to arrive at conclusions based on statistical analyses of the contributions.

The time for completion of the study did not allow arrangements to be made for a series of public hearings; therefore, the majority of submissions received were in the form of comments and briefs. As the participants in the study were not afforded a public forum for the expression of their views, some of the submissions are quoted at length in the body of this report, in order to give an accurate representation of the concerns that were raised.

The invitation to contribute to the study was extended by means of advertisements in major newspapers, by letters, and during interviews on radio and television. The response indicates a high degree of interest and reveals widely diifering attitudes. Some individuals oppose the use of the social insurance number on the basis that it is impersonal to be identified primarily by a number. Others suspect that possession of the number provides access to all recorded information about a given person. Some fear that the number facilitates surreptitious or inappropriate linkage of data. Some resist using the number for religious reasons. Some see the use of the number as either the first, or the final step in a totalitarian takeover. A number of people have an aversion to the use of numbers for personal identification because of experiences during the Second World War. Still others object to the use of the number for purposes other than those originally intended by the federal government. On the other hand, some contributors praise the efficiency and accuracy resulting from the use of the number in machine processing of data and they advocate its universal application for identification purposes.

The widespread use of the social insurance number soon became apparent. In the federal government sphere, the number is required on a long list of forms, ranging from employees' travel claims to requests for access to personal information banks, and applications for participation in the annual goose hunt; in provincial jurisdictions, on lists of electors or applications for fishing licences, and in the private sector, it may be required to cash cheques or to rent a vacuum cleaner. It was apparent that many users of personal information outside the federal government had

adopted the social insurance number rather than establishing a system of their own. Some reported that changing their recording systems to use another number would be costly.

On some forms, it appeared that the social insurance number was requested simply because it existed and the space was there.

When the opportunity arose, we asked individuals why they objected to the use of the social insurance number. The majority answered that it enabled the recipient of the number to gain access to other records concerning the individual and that the person who provided it would have no knowledge of the use that would be made of the information.

Having determined that the number was used extensively and for many purposes and that the real threat to personal privacy might lie in the computer linkage of data, by whatever means, we found, to our surprise, that data-linkage was not widespread. In fact, the social insurance number was primarily used to identify individuals with the same name. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the number has the potential both for use as a universal identifier and for data-linkage. However, it is also apparent that prohibition of the collection and use of the social insurance number will not eliminate sharing of information in computerized data banks. Whether it is useful and indeed practical to limit the collection and the use of the social insurance number is one of the subjects addressed in this report. It is hoped that this report will convince readers that much more than the regulation or prohibition of the use of the social insurance number is necessary to prevent the perceived harms.

In everyday affairs, it is important to protect against inappropriate and unacceptable linkage of personal information. Individuals have legitimate claims to privacy of their personal information; they should also have the right to insist that sharing of information between users be circumscribed in law. An individual may willingly supply personal data in return for certain benefits provided by one party, but may be equally insistent that the same information not be made available to another party.

Data-linkage by means of the social insurance number may represent a threat to privacy but it is important to consider that any other form of data-linkage could have the same effect. It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that information stored in a computer is not "filed" under a specific number or other attribute of the data. We have come to expect data to be recorded in a "linear fashion" and we are used to being able to obtain a file by giving the number or the name of the file. Electronically-recorded information can, however, be recalled by whatever identifier is commanded by the program. Initially, numbers were associated with computer programming because computers were first used to solve numerical problems. However, data-linkage can be accomplished by means of any attribute or combination of attributes with very minimal effort and time. The dangers ascribed to linkage using the social insurance number are inherent in all data-linkage.

The capacity exists to store a vast amount of information in minimal storage space. The information may be kept for an indeterminate time, may be recalled or transmitted instantaneously elsewhere and it may be manipulated in as many different ways as imaginable. The means and procedures necessary to accomplish such feats are available at ever decreasing cost and increasing sophistication.

Ensuring that data systems are useful without jeopardizing the right to privacy of information depends on the requirement for a proper balance between costs and benefits, and between individual and collective rights. To forbid the use of the social insurance number beyond areas sanctioned by current legislation has immediate appeal. It would be easily accomplished and could be seen as an effective means for preventing inappropriate data-linkage. However, given the capabilities of modern data processing systems, that policy would be of benefit only in some instances and for a short term and might result in the false impression that the problems associated with data-linkage had been solved. As will be discussed in this report, decisions on when it is proper to link data and when data-linkage should be curtailed, regulated or outright forbidden, must be made with the knowledge of the capacity of information systems and techniques.

Our study made it clear that there is a need for public education; that individuals must treat their own personal information intelligently and must respect the right to information privacy of others. The public must be made aware that options are available when personal information is requested. Many individuals seem to think that when they are asked a question, an answer is necessarily required. Legislative support should be given to the principle that those who collect personal information must adhere to certain basic standards, including the right of an individual data subject to know the purpose for which personal information is gathered, for whose use the information is gathered, for how long the information will be kept, how it will be transmitted or discarded, and whether the right to examine the information and to correct it in case of error is provided. Furthermore, the individual should, subject to a few express exceptions, be protected against undisclosed, secondary uses of personal information.

These conclusions led to further questions of confidentiality and security and we concluded that mechanical security and encryption would not be sufficient to safeguard personal information. Because the link in the chain that most frequently breaks is human, we determined that there is a need for public education and involvement in setting standards for those who handle personal information. But we also thought that, in some instances, punitive measures are necessary to prevent or curtail unacceptable uses of personal information.

This report therefore recommends that a criminal offence "against the privacy of another" be enacted, that the federal government inform individuals of their rights and responsibilities in respect of data privacy, that the use by the federal government of individuals' social insurance numbers be terminated on application by individuals and on their assumption of any exceptional costs, and finally, that the need for contingency plans to meet the effect of natural and man-made disasters on data privacy be studied.

1.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The descriptions of the extent of the use of the social insurance number are based on inquiries conducted by staff; the opinions were developed as a cooperative effort after I was educated and inspired by many conversations with staff. I also listened to the views of journalists and of the many individuals I met during the course of the study. I should like to thank the hosts of open-line radio programs for inviting me to take part in these programs, thus providing a unique opportunity for public conversations about the use of the social insurance number. I also want to thank all the individuals who took the time to write letters recounting their particular experiences with the use of the number or their opinions and ideas on the subject, and the many experts who volunteered their time and expertise to prepare carefully-reasoned briefs.

On behalf of the staff and myself, I wish to thank the many government officials at all levels who helped by collecting information and by sharing their knowledge with us.

Professor John W. Senders acted as a consultant to the study. He instructed us in computer technology and shared his philosophy regarding the impact of that technology on life today. That task was not easy and this report would have been incomplete without his help.

Professor David H. Flaherty prepared a thorough historical account covering the period from the time the social insurance number was introduced in Parliament until this study was begun. Professor Flaherty's account, which is published as a separate study paper, cleared up some myths and was of invaluable assistance in discussions of the problems involved in this study.

The study was directed by Mr. Gary Blake who is a permanent investigator in the Privacy Commissioner's office. I would particularly like to thank him for his thoroughness and skill in collecting information and in assembling the factual portions of this report.

The people listed below were members of the study group. They did the research, conducted the inquiries, and answered correspondence and telephone

inquiries with great enthusiasm and skill. I would like to thank them for this. Their names and terms are listed here:

Helga Wintal	employed from 3 March to 4 July
James (Jim) McKenzie	employed from 3 March to 21 August
Susan Rain	employed from 5 March to 29 August
Randell (Randy) Stanton	employed from 3 March to 31 Oct
Pierre Laporte	employed from 7 April to 28 November

Support Staff

Shona Trent	employed from 3 March to 1 August
Dorothy MacPhie	employed from 5 August to 29 August
Diane Guévremont	employed from 3 March to 10 October
Deborah Walz	employed from 14 October to 31 October
Brenda Krauter	employed from 10 March to 31 December

Editor

William Wendt

In addition I should like to acknowledge with thanks the administrative support given to us by Mr. George Hamelin, the Director of Investigations in the Privacy Commissioner's office. Mr. Hamelin organized the provision of staff and resources and provided liaison with the administrative and financial services of the Ministry of Justice from which the study received its financial resources.

The conclusions in this report are, however, ultimately my responsibility and it should perhaps be added that in no circumstances should my opinions or the recommendations be read as an indication of future government action. The recommendations are not made in the expectation their adoption will solve all the

problems relating to the use of the social insurance number. I do hope, however, that this report will broaden the scope of the debate and that action will be taken to ensure appropriate privacy rights in Canada.

PART II

THE EXTENT OF SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER USE

2.1 COMMENTS AND BRIEFS FROM THE PUBLIC

INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the introduction to this report, public hearings were not held. Hearings would have been useful, but to arrange and conduct public hearings in representative communities would have made it difficult to complete the study within the allotted time. Participation in the study was invited, however, by advertisements in major newspapers, during interviews on radio and television, and in the case of various institutions and organizations, by letters. A summary of the comments and briefs received is given in this section.

LETTERS FROM INDIVIDUALS

Most of the letters from individuals suggested that social insurance number use should be limited, but approximately 10 per cent of the letters approved the present level of social insurance number use or advocated wider use. The prevention of fraud and the promotion of administrative efficiency were often mentioned in arguments supporting use of the number. As well, a few letters mentioned the need to combat terrorism.

> The surest and best way to ensure proper credit and safety is the full use of our SIN. (Ottawa, Ontario)

> As honest citizens its use should constitute no threat to privacy. It would be a threat to those who wish to deceive or defraud. (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

The use of the SIN will not have any adverse effect on anyone who keeps his nose clean. (St. Albert, Alberta)

I simply cannot understand the objections. I'm afraid that these persons who are making a fuss are those who never see the broader picture with all of its potential but only their narrow little one-sided view. Even then, what on earth are they afraid of? Unless they have something to hide? (Victoria, British Columbia)

I feel that the social insurance number should be used as a government file number on everyone in the country. The only persons who should not want this are those who are making fraudulent use of society's benefits in more ways than I know of. The Old Mother Hens in society should be rewarded for being honest and industrious and not the termites. (Cochrane, Alberta)

Ceux qui n'ont rien a cacher, ni dans leur revenus, ni dans leur conduite, ou encore aux bureaux de douanne, immigration/émigration, ou dans leurs relations avec les "étrangers", se demandent bien ce que tout ce bruit peut signifier....! (Boucherville, Québec)

I have absolutely no aversion to the broad use of this number and I feel it will eliminate confusion and misidentification. The system is excellent - a simple 9 digit number that is versatile yet confidential. In fact I think numbers should be issued for corporations. I have absolute trust in those government agencies having access to the SIN and in no

> way feel that there is, has been or will be any invasion of my privacy. (Corner Brook, Newfoundland)

Most of those supporting increased use of social insurance numbers did not express the confidence in government agencies expressed in the above letters. Such letters acknowledged the possibility of dangers in widespread use of the number, but on balance maintained that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. One extensive letter of this type follows:

> I do not consider that my privacy has been unduly invaded nor significantly lessened by the wider use of the Social Insurance Number.
>
> Rather, I consider that my privacy is enhanced by reasons of the positive identification provided by the Social Insurance Number assigned exclusively to me. My name does not provide the same positive identification as there are many [people with the same name as the writer].
>
> My Social Insurance Number can be used in many ways to provide positive identification of myself and of transactions pertaining to me.
>
> I realize that to some degree my privacy is lessened by the wider use of my Social Insurance Number by both governmental and non governmental bodies. But, in my considered opinion, the gain arising from the positive identification my Social Insurance Number provides far offsets any loss of privacy that takes place.
>
> There is little doubt that from time to time someone may find a way, through unauthorized or improper use of the Social Insurance Number, to abuse the

rights and privacy of myself and others. The level of such abuse will not be significantly increased, nor will it be materially reduced, whether the abuser identifies his victim by Social Insurance Number or by other means.

It is obvious that the growing use of the computer will make it necessary to protect as fully as is practicable against unauthorized access to Social Insurance Numbers, data banks, etc. I'm certain this protection can be provided at a cost that will be more than offset by the advantages arising from the use of the Social Insurance Numbers.

Statutory regulation of the Social Insurance Number is and will be necessary to ensure that each person is assigned only one number and that each number be unique to that person. This has not always been the case. Duplicate numbers (two numbers) when detected must be corrected carefully.

The use of the Social Insurance Number by provincial and municipal governments is a natural and useful extension of the need for positive identification of the individual and of the transactions related to the individual. Such use could well be expanded to include drivers licences [provincial medical and hospitalization plans] property tax etc.

Certain non governmental organizations are now using the Social Insurance Numbers of their customers etc. for identification purposes. I can see no compelling reason why such uses should not be continued.

> The need for strict privacy is not as great as the need for positive identification of persons. The high cost of tracing and identifying persons (and bodies) has long since passed the point where the individual's desire for privacy can be considered paramount. (Grimsby, Ontario)

Few of the letters from individuals touched on as many points as the preceding. The typical correspondent expressed a point of view and supported it with one or two arguments. In the case of those favouring increased use, most cited administrative efficiency or the prevention of crime. In the case of those opposing increased use, most expressed opposition to personal registration, misuse of personal information, or suspected data-linkage.

Part of the opposition to a personal registration number system was based on the conviction that people deserve to be identified by their names and to have records about them stored accordingly. That the use of a cradle-to-grave identification number symbolizes inadequate respect for the individual was expressed this way by some individuals:

> My personal feelings on this number is that it's degrading to me as a person and as a citizen to be thought of as just a number. (Calgary, Alberta)

> In any event I object to S.I.N. since I am a person and not a number. (Regina, Saskatchewan)

> I think many of us greatly resent and fear the concept of being depersonalized by becoming a number. (Guelph, Ontario)

> We need more humanity, more individualism, more personality, more reverence for all life and its uniqueness. The numbers game is a step in the wrong direction. (Cowichan Bay, British Columbia)

Some of those opposing widespread use of social insurance numbers associated them with the registration numbers used by totalitarian governments for the control or elimination of opposition:

> I come from a country where you are officially tied to one number. This number allows the government access to you through its central computer file where all data under this number is kept. Abuses of such a system need not be enumerated, they are obvious. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

> It would seem that the SIN no longer stands for 'Social Insurance Number' but rather 'Social Identity Number'. This subtle shift places us in league with all those nations in the world who require that their citizens have identity cards, a practice which has never been approved by act of Parliament or by vote of the populace. (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

> If all activities of an individual are coded by his S.I.N., the government has stripped him of the possibility of secrecy more effectively than the Nazis did to those whom they tattooed with a number. (Kitchener, Ontario)

> One of the first large scale assignments of numbers to people occurred in concentration camps. Any camp survivor will attest to the dehumanizing effect which being a mere number has on the psyche and self image. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

> To allow more extensive use of the SIN would only bring us into the reality of Mr. Orwell's 1984. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

While some of those supporting increased social insurance number use said they had faith in the custodians of the records, others wrote of their mistrust:

> The present danger is that we will come to feel more and more comfortable with a situation in which every aspect of our personal lives and conduct are part of a matrix of information which becomes a pool of information when linked together with the unifying force of a single number. This comfort derives from some strangely mis-founded belief that those who control the information in this pool are our friends and have, do and will continue to use the information for the greater enhancement of our personal and individual well-being. There is absolutely nothing about government in the past, present or in the foreseeable future that can be reasonably said to justify such faith. (Kelowna, British Columbia)

Some of those opposed to increased use of social insurance numbers wanted to know what records about them were kept by government and private organizations. They wanted to be sure that the information was correct, and they wanted to be consulted before the information was shared or used for a purpose other than that for which it was provided. In their view, the use of the number increases the danger of personal information being improperly handled and used.

> ...I have no confidence that a computer system would store accurate information about me. I should want the right to inspect and correct or comment upon information in the file and have my comments added to the file. I should also want the knowledge of who has the files freely available. I should also want to

> know who has been looking at the file and for what purpose. (St. John's, Newfoundland)
>
> How can individual liberty be maintained when all blueprints call for central data banks and ever increasing ease of access? How can individual privacy be assured when thousands of government and corporate employees have occasion to search - even "fish" - in confidential files?
> Enough is enough! For a change, why doesn't this study strike a blow for individual liberty and privacy rather than add one more nail to its coffin? (St. Lambert, Quebec)
>
> At present, we are removing ourselves from the world as named people and becoming nine digits on computers. These computers then record and spit out information to whomever possesses the right recall inputs. Little controls or checks for authenticity of this information is done. Individuals often do not know what is recorded, how to check, correct etc. - reputations are often ruined. (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Although it was anticipated that most opposition to the widespread use of social insurance numbers would be based on concern about data sharing or data-linkage, references to those dangers were limited to approximately 25% of the letters from individuals. Examples of this point of view were expressed in the following letters:

> ...all anyone here has to do to find anything about anyone is quote the SIN number. Surely this was not the purpose of this number. (Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia)
>
> Now, either everyone asks for your SIN because of a widespread 20th

> century inclination to gather information for information's sake - they want your SIN because they can, and do, use it as an entree into databanks containing information on other facets of your life or financial transactions. (Sydney, Nova Scotia)
>
> I do not need every little clerk in Canada with access to a computer to use my SIN number to get information about my income tax return, or any other personal information. (Ottawa, Ontario)
>
> It would appear that the SIN has come to be seen simply as an easy piece of identification. I object to this practice - not because I am aware of any abuses, but because I can never be certain that they have not occurred or will not occur in the future. The potential for joining data banks, and (secretly) accumulating information on everything, from a person's age, to their credit rating, to their health and employment records, to their library delinquency rate is there. The possible implications are frightening. (Ottawa, Ontario)
>
> Since magazines and credit companies take this information exchange as a God-given right, I can't see how others could refuse the temptation. (Windsor, Ontario)
>
> Take the SIN out of the computers. (Milton, Ontario)

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by a man whose employer uses social insurance numbers as employee identification:

> I have no information which would lead me to believe that they are using SIN as a data linkage device over and above that which would be

> normal for a general employee number but I would feel much more comfortable if they had a general employee number that did not have the implications that the use of SIN is subject to. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

A federal public servant, who noted that social insurance numbers are required on more than 20 internal forms concerning public servants, made an estimate of the ease with which personal information on individuals could be obtained:

> I submit that the widespread use of the number and the casual fashion in which it is treated would render it comparatively easy for any individual with a basic knowledge of government office practice to obtain another individual's S.I.N. and assemble a considerable quantity of information on that individual. This could be done quite openly and would arouse little suspicion. (Regina, Saskatchewan)

The reference in the above letter to the "casual fashion" in which social insurance numbers are handled is an example of a concern expressed by many of those opposed to widespread use of the numbers.

Other letters disapproved of the use of the number on employee identification cards and badges. A number of letters disapproved of governments, employers and unions sending mail in which the social insurance number of the recipient was included in the address label or was visible through the envelope window.

A few letters mentioned objections to the collection of the number by employers before hiring, that is, at a time when the employer is not under a statutory obligation to have the number for purposes of government social programs or taxation:

> I have provided my SIN number to potential employers who subsequently have not hired me, but have kept my number on file. How

> do I know they haven't shared this information with other people? I don't think I should have to provide my number until after I am hired. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

A letter from parents objecting to a request for social insurance numbers on health questionnaires given to their school-aged children told of the possibility that the number would be used to link health records and to deny job opportunities:

> We are concerned that 10 years down the road any potential employer, through the SIN number, could get our children's complete health records, even though certain physical ailments could be cleared up when the child reaches adulthood. Whether the child is healthy or unhealthy, he or she should have the right to convey this personal information himself to a potential employer. (Sudbury,Ontario)

One of the most common complaints from parents involved the requirement by minor hockey associations that children present a social insurance card when registering in the various leagues. Many letters protested this practice:

> It seems utterly incomprehensible that none of my sons could play amateur hockey without providing a SIN. It is inconceivable that the Association could possibly have a legitimate need for it. (Deep River, Ontario.)
>
> ...my two sons could not play minor hockey until they produced social insurance numbers. They were 12 and 14 at that time. That, to me, is a flagrant misuse of the number. (Carstairs, Alberta)
>
> ...in order for my nine year old son to continue playing amateur sports this coming fall, it will be

> necessary for him to have a social insurance number and for the number to be produced to the organizing association. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

In connection with such complaints, representatives of the social insurance number study learned, in consultation with the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA), that the collection of social insurance numbers was prompted by an agreement with the National Hockey League. The CAHA wished to ensure that financial assistance it received from the National Hockey League was directed to the minor league teams that had helped to develop players who reached the professional level. To expedite this program of financial assistance the CAHA, at its Quebec City Annual meeting in 1975, amended its regulations to require that participants report a social insurance number when registering. At this time, officials from the Unemployment Insurance Commission were consulted. They had no official objection, apparently because the disclosure of one's social insurance number was considered a voluntary act.

The CAHA explained that it felt this change in the regulations was necessary because approximately 500,000 players were registered anew each year. Someone named Robert could very well register as Bobby one year, Bob the next, and Robert the year after, and many players have similar or identical surnames. Compounding the problem of identification is the likelihood that players will, during the course of their careers, play in various parts of the country. For purposes of positive verification, the social insurance number, then, became the file identifier used by the organization. Yet, in the 1979-80 season, the CAHA eliminated the social insurance number requirement. This move was provoked, no doubt, by rising public indignation, and by the end of the financial aid provided by the National Hockey League.

Although most letters from individuals dealt with one or two arguments, a few letters discussed the issue in general and weighed the arguments from both sides of the issue. The following are excerpts from two such letters:

> We are concerned that the use of S.I.N. by governments and institutions will detract from the

quality of life enjoyed by citizens of our country by making relations between the individual and the state (or organization) mechanical and dehumanized.

We both see the benefits which come from the use of such numbers: computer storage and retrieval, avoidance of mistakes of identity and so on could all be facilitated by their use. However we see that the benefits accrue to the administrators and policy makers - not to the individual. We are quite prepared to pay the additional cost of running a system which does not make use of the S.I.N. in return for personal and human treatment. In addition we are prepared to accept that a certain proportion of the population with 'something to hide' will be successful in their endeavours - and that we will have to pay something for this behaviour.

Our concerns spring from personal experience of living in a country which uses numbers, I.D. cards and so on for its citizens. Such a system is clumsy, demeaning and (even with a benign government) threatening.

In sum - we are happy with the use of the S.I.N. as originally approved by Parliament but opposed to extension of its use. (Sudbury, Ontario)

There are some (particularly bureaucrats and systems analysts) who say that their work would be made a lot easier if everyone had a unique number which could be used for everything. Firstly, these people are frequently automatons or technocrats who are somewhat

blinkered and do not see the whole scene; they are so engrossed in their own work that they ignore the social consequences of their actions. Secondly, almost the opposite of their claim is true: as a result of today's technology their work is already made easier because it is a straightforward matter for machines to handle the data which they are collecting, and, machines make it easier for individuals to have more than one number.

There are yet others who say they have nothing to hide and will expose their whole life upon demand. Firstly, I believe that many of these people are deluding themselves; even they have thoughts and experiences which they would not want to have fall into the wrong hands. Secondly, there are people who view their private lives as being private and do not want to have all aspects of their life from medical history, to immigration history, to legal history, to financial history, to marital history, to educational history, to employment history, all linked together. Once it is linked together it is that much easier for a much wider group of people to access it all and draw incorrect inferences.

There are some who say that the adoption or use of a unique, universal, and machine-readable identifier does not violate an individual's privacy because all the information which would be linked by the number can already be obtained directly or surreptitiously; the SIN just makes it easier and therefore we should attack the root problem and ensure the security of the various data

> banks. This may be a valid point; however, today's computer security is notoriously insecure, but more importantly, the SIN is the means by which these data banks can be linked. If one admits that there are data banks which contain private information which should not be accessed by the world at large, then, surely, one way of preventing such access is to remove the means. The situation is similar to one aspect of hand-gun control. It is illegal to commit murder yet it has been found necessary to control the means (hand-guns) by which murder can be committed. Similarly, to prevent privacy invasion, the means (identifiers like SIN) should be restricted in use and application. (Ottawa, Ontario)

Many of the letters opposing the proliferation of the use of the social insurance numbers recounted experiences with organizations that have requested the numbers:

> I wrote my Member of Parliament about this about 1976. At that time my son was playing hockey for the Catholic Youth Organization as my other sons before had. However, this one was to have a S.I.N. number. I ignored the request the first time but was told they had to have it the next time he went to join. I refused to get one and simply took him out of hockey. That's when I wrote the M.P.. I told him there was something wrong when a child had to have a S.I.N. to have fun. Well, I ran into the same thing when the same child joined cadets. By now he's 14 or close and I can't keep him out of everything so I got the number. (Orillia, Ontario)

> Why do insurance companies, credit companies, banks and retail stores ask for my Social Insurance Number and what do they do with it? Why did I have to surrender my Social Insurance Number to a library office worker in order to get my library card? (not even she could explain to me why it was required) Do I really have a choice to go elsewhere?
> There has developed a tremendous body of what I shall refer to as "non-law" in this area. People have become so used to either using (or abusing) the number that they consciously believe that there must be "some law" that allows them to request it. (Edmonton, Alberta)

> It's true that, in theory, you can refuse to give it out. But you're usually in a lose-lose situation. You want to cash a cheque, rent an apartment or get a job. The power commission asks for it. Give it, and they've got it. Refuse: and they've got you -- no electricity. (Sydney, Nova Scotia)

Some of the letters opposing widespread social insurance number use pointed out that it has been difficult to find out what uses are to be made of the number and whether those uses are required by law.

> I have been unable to obtain reliable information about the use that banks actually make of SINs; tellers and bank managers express ignorance. Perhaps they don't know; this is not surprising; no doubt the banks wish to keep it to themselves. More surprising and less satisfactory is the lack of readily available information concerning the activities of the Unemployment Insurance Commission (UIC) or the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC), relating to SINs. (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

> When I attempted to find the statutory authority for the creation and use of the Social Insurance Number I had to undertake an extensive search in the Income Tax Act, the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Canada Pension Act, etc., with the accompanying regulations. If I had the option I think it would have been easier to walk blindfolded through a maze. (Edmonton, Alberta)

Approximately one half of the letters expressing opposition to widespread use of the number referred to the fact that it had been introduced not as a general purpose identifying number but as an account number for a few government programs, and approximately one quarter of the letters recommended that the use be limited to a few federal government programs.

Most of the letters calling for limits on use drew attention to dangers in the utilization of the number in both the public and private sectors, but some letters singled out the private sector:

> I object most strongly, the use of the Social Insurance Number by all private institutions, particularly the Banks, Trust Companies, Credit Unions and all credit agencies and merchants who seek identity. If we need a national identity card, then let everyone carry a Citizenship Identity Card for this purpose. (Vancouver, British Columbia)

The following letter is not typical in that it attributes the growing use of social insurance numbers exclusively to the efforts of the federal government. In its reference to the original purpose of the number and its compilation of uses which the correspondent has encountered, however, it is similar to some others received.

> I am old enough to remember the introduction of the SIN. I also remember the Prime Minister rising in the House to assure Canadians that the SIN was to be used only in

> connection with the Canada Pension Plan. In those days I believed what a Prime Minister said. To me, the SIN was to be my account number with the CPP, in the same way as I have an account number with Eatons, Simpsons or Shell Oil.
>
> Over the years I have found that this is, in fact, not the case. At the request of the government my employer wanted my SIN; the Army replaced my regimental number with my SIN; the bank, as demanded by the government, wanted my SIN before it would cash CSB coupons at face value; the baby bonus people wanted my SIN; my life insurance company, again at the request of the government, wanted my SIN and I discovered DND sending me postcards which showed my SIN to all who handled it. I have never had a request from a private corporation/individual for my SIN but the government keeps demanding it for various reasons which are not related to CPP. I'm left with the funny feeling that the government was not listening to Mr. Pearson. They are turning what should be a simple account number into an all-encompassing identification number which can be used as a cross reference between various departments. This, of course, is an intolerable situation. (London, Ontario)

While it would be difficult to list all the examples of social insurance number collection provided in letters to the study, the following give some indication of the range of purposes for which the number was requested:

buying, cashing and clipping coupons from Canada Savings Bonds
cashing cheques
applying for credit cards
starting a Registered Retirement Savings Plan

opening accounts at banks and credit unions
opening a commodity account
purchasing traveller's cheques
applying for a passport
applying for a hunting licence
applying for union membership
renewing a magazine subscription
having a telephone installed
applying for a furnace oil contract
applying for a job
obtaining a job
obtaining library cards
borrowing books from a library
renewing a driver's licence
making dental or medical insurance claims
applying to rent a parking space
renting a carpet cleaner
picking up registered mail
registering at universities and community colleges
renting an apartment
enrolling in minor hockey
booking a domestic charter flight
entering a hospital
receiving emergency hospital treatment
applying for the right to bid in an auction
joining a health club
applying to hunt wild geese.

BRIEFS AND SUBMISSIONS FROM INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

If a complete list of all organizations collecting and using the social insurance number were compiled it would be very long, but only four main reasons were advanced for the collection of the social insurance number. They are: an obligation in law; convenience; the need to positively identify persons, and a desire to link data.

Some organizations, institutions, and businesses, reported that they collect and use the number only for purposes required by law. Others mentioned additional uses and argued that, as these uses were in society's best interest, they should not be restricted by legislation.

The briefs expressed a range of views on social insurance number use which was in most cases more moderate than the views of individuals. For instance, although many organizations argued that the

use to which they put the number should not be restricted, no organization advocated its use as a national personal registration number. On the other side of the argument, although some organizations opposed the widespread use of the number, they saw a potential danger in data-linkage, rather than assuming, as many individuals did, that unauthorized persons are already using social insurance numbers to obtain personal information from a number of data banks.

It is noteworthy that the briefs from organizations using the number revealed an understanding of the privacy implications of social insurance number use. The submissions expressing the personal opinions of officials of collecting organizations suggest that the same debate on privacy and social insurance number use which has been seen on editorial pages and in Parliament, has also occurred in boardrooms. Some of the briefs reported that discussion of the issue had resulted in measures to restrict use of the number:

> We recently carried out an internal study on administrative uses of the S.I.N. for purposes other than those authorized by statute. It was found that S.I. numbers are being supplied by the company to several carriers of health insurance and other benefit plans. Some provincial government health insurance plans and private carriers...have requested us to provide S.I. numbers in addition to, or in place of, employee numbers. While we appreciate the administrative convenience of such a practice for insurers who deal with many companies, we have become increasingly dissatisfied with this arrangement. Approximately two years ago, we adopted a policy of avoiding further disclosure of S.I. numbers to bodies other than the federal government. Recently, we negotiated a standardized national extended health care plan with a single carrier. When the new plan is implemented, S.I. numbers will no longer be provided,

> as this was one of the terms of our agreement with the insurer. (Imperial Oil Limited)

Queen's University reported that staff identification cards used for borrowing library books and using the university's recreation facilities show the staff member's social insurance number as an identifying number but this practice will be changed. The university expressed its reluctance to use the number in reports:

> In order to ensure the privacy of student and staff records, we use our own numbering system rather than relying on the SIN in the detailed reports which we are required to submit to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in Ontario and to Statistics Canada. Both the Ministry and Stats Canada have requested that we conform to the practice of most other universities in using the SIN for this purpose. So far, there has been no suggestion that we will be compelled to do so.

Another educational institution, Humber College, referred to outside requests for the social insurance number, as well as its own internal use of the number.

> The social insurance number is the identification number of almost all of our 150,000 student records. We have provided for a student to opt for another identifying number of the record, but in our experience most applicants routinely supply the social insurance number in their application without any urging, and that very few (less than 1%) object to, or even question the use of the social insurance number as the record ID number.
>
> Our enrollment includes students sponsored by Canada Manpower who

> require that we produce regular reports with students identified by the social insurance number. This is true to varying extents in all 22 of Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

The New Brunswick Telephone Company described its efforts to reduce the use of the number in its records:

> Like other institutions in both the public and private sectors, SINs were becoming very widely used at NBTel through the seventies. Ours is a highly mechanized corporation and, as a matter of convenience more than anything else, SIN's were used to identify our 2,700 employees in a variety of computer systems. They were actually used on 110 different forms and in 179 different computer programs that encompassed everything from mileage on personal vehicles to company identification cards and expense statements.
>
> In late 1978, the officers of the company intervened. An objective was established to eliminate the use of SIN's except where legally required. Furthermore, we ordered the elimination of the same identifying number in different programs so as to prevent cross-indexing. We also decided to stop asking employees to identify themselves with numbers.
>
> By the summer of 1979, the objectives had been largely met and by the end of the year, the project was completely finished.... The financial expenditure for the entire project was only 0.04 per cent of our 1979 operating expenses.

A few briefs made the point that the use of the social insurance number as an account number or employee number had been encouraged by an increasing

number of requests from the federal government for the collection and recording of the number of employees and clients:

> The record will show that insurers were reluctant to obtain and use the Social Insurance Number of applicants and policy holders. It was not needed for their operations and it required setting aside nine columns of a punch card or a nine-figure field in a computer program. However, after the 1972 revision of the Income Tax Act the Department of National Revenue became insistent that the Number be obtained for more and more purposes. Obtaining the Number from existing policyholders involved time and expense on the part of the companies and their agents. Experience showed the companies that the better practice was to obtain the number from applicants at the time of the application rather than to have to try to get it later on. Because the Number was being obtained, albeit for tax reporting purposes the companies found it convenient to use as a unique identifier. (The Association of Accident and Sickness Insurers and The Canadian Life Insurance Association)

> The Corporation uses the Social Insurance Number as an employee identification number. Until several years ago this was not the case and the employee number was unique to the Corporation. However, at the time several government departments began to require the Social Insurance Number in returns of information involving our employees. It then became practical and less costly to use the Social Insurance Number as our employee number. (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation)

Several briefs and letters referred to the argument that the use of numbers for clients, employees, members, etc., may be preserving the privacy of individuals rather than intruding upon it. This argument makes the point that if a unique identifying number is available, there may be no need to collect personal information such as age, sex or marital status and, in fact, those handling the records of individuals may not even need to know names.

> It is indeed interesting to note that a claim identified only by Social Insurance Number and policy number can move through a department without anyone being aware of the identity of the individual complainant. One of our members noted this ensures that each claim is given the same attention on the basis of merit and certainly precludes covert discrimination for or against the insured. From this point of view, then, it can be said that the use of the Number ensures the confidentiality of the information. (Canadian Association of Accident and Sickness Insurers and The Canadian Life Insurance Association)

Opposed to this view is the opinion that social insurance numbers may be the key to unauthorized access to personal information held in data banks and that the number itself, far from being anonymous, contains a code revealing the region of the country in which application for the number was made.

> All employers are required to request and use an individual's SIN subsequent to that individual gaining employment under the provision of Canada's employment and immigration legislation. This is a legitimate statutory use. Unfortunately, however, this requirement when associated with the present proliferation of SIN use, affords employers with an opportunity to gain access to

> credit, medical or other personal information that may impact unfavourably on the employee or prospective employee. Furthermore, because the SIN system is designed to provide information on an individual's place of birth, it can, potentially, be used by an employer to discriminate against an individual on the basis of religious or cultural bias. (Consumers' Association of Canada)

In its brief, the Consumers' Association of Canada also reported a recent change of policies on social insurance number use in the private sector.

> While most financial institutions ask for an individual's SIN prior to the opening of a bank account or granting credit, many of them have recently claimed that the services they offer will not be withheld if the individual refuses to disclose his/her SIN. We were advised, by credit grantors, et al., of what appears to be a significant policy change by the private sector, relative to SIN use, when we attempted to verify the many 'horror stories' that had been recounted to us. However, the policy change is by no means universal, and is based, in part at least, on a perception that you will recommend, and the government will institute, restrictions on private sector use. Furthermore, the companies that have advised CAC that they no longer require SIN identification, seemingly are making no effort to advertise the fact to their customers. In this context it should also be noted that corporate or head office policy frequently takes a long time to filter down to, or can be misinterpreted by, the officials who meet the consumer face to face.

> To CAC, the most disturbing private sector use of the SIN involves a company explaining or justifying their SIN disclosure policy as a statutory requirement when it is not. One close-to-home example, involves a National Capital Region hotel where our Executive has, in the past, stayed during executive meetings of the Association. Members of our executive who refused to disclose their SIN were told that the Ontario Hotel Registration of Guests Act requires SIN disclosure and individuals who refused to comply were ordered to pay their bills in advance. This situation applied even though the bills were to have been paid, under account, directly by CAC's national office. (Consumers' Association of Canada)

The criticisms contained in letters from individuals, of the manner in which social insurance numbers are requested, were repeated by a few of the organizations submitting briefs to the study:

> What makes resistance to the information gathering tasks so hard for the individual citizen is the ironic fact that the onus is now on the individual to resist providing the number or to ask for a rationale for the request. Information is asked for simply as a matter of course: no assurances, no reasons, no compensations. It is also often cloaked in an air of institutional appropriateness. Unfortunately, only a few citizens have been warned of the possible consequences. (Civil Liberties Association - National Capital Region)

Several of the briefs opposing widespread use of the number disputed the position taken by federal government officials that disclosure is an individual choice, that is, except where required by law, an

individual can choose not to reveal his or her number. The briefs suggested that in reality there is no choice:

> Freedom of negotiation is insufficient protection against victimization for failure to produce one's S.I.N. Monopoly and oligopoly market structures in certain segments of our economy render this freedom illusionary. And even where the market structure is freely competitive, refusal to disclose a S.I.N. may require that the S.I.N. holder sacrifice access to a desired good or service. (Canadian Labour Congress)
>
> The issue, from our perspective, is often one of negotiation between two totally unequal parties. Private sector SIN use situations are rarely conducive to negotiation. An individual who refuses to disclose his/her SIN may be denied access to a specific good or service; and if SIN disclosure is corporate policy, no negotiation will take place. In this type of intransigent marketplace environment where the cards are stacked against the private citizen, government action is desirable and responsible. (Consumers' Association of Canada)

A brief from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America told of the union's successful attempts to have an employer alter a plan to use social insurance numbers on employee identification badges but suggested that other employees, without a union to intercede for them, could only look to government if they wanted use of the number restricted:

> These workers [the union members who objected to social insurance number use] were determined in their effort to stop this attack on their privacy and had a union to back them and undertake the fight on their behalf. But many millions

> of Canadians are not in this position and are at the mercy of the ever growing number of businesses and institutions that use S.I.N.s indiscriminately. These people can only rely on their government to protect what measure of privacy they have left.

A representative of another company disclosed, in conversation, that his company had abandoned the idea of using the number because it was easier to change the system than to explain to employees that it made no difference to use the social insurance number as opposed to another number. The issue had become a labour-management dispute which the company saw no reason to engage in.

A few letters came from organizations wanting to make exceptions to the generally accepted principles of confidentiality in record keeping, for the purposes of tracing defaulting spouses and enforcing maintenance orders:

> As for the threat to privacy forseen in the use of social insurance numbers for tracing spouses who are in default of maintenance payments whose privacy is at stake here? Clearly, there are two parties involved. The spouse left with no child support has no privacy, she/he is often forced to go on public welfare. The negligent spouse is the party whose privacy is being defended. Whenever the question of the right to privacy is raised we must ask the question 'Whose privacy?' (Winnipeg YWCA)

> It is the contention of the MACSW that the maintenance order default must be differentiated from debt owing creditors. Both the causes and the effects of the delinquencies are different. Creditors have control over extending credit and are not wholly dependent on delinquent accounts.

> Recipients of maintenance orders are at the mercy of the courts with regard to their awards and in most cases have no other economic support (excepting welfare payments). Creditors extend credit on goods with a dollar value. The value to society of the recipients of maintenance orders is immeasurable. (The Manitoba Action Commitee on the Status of Women)

Several police organizations described the use of social insurance numbers in Operation Identification and Operation Protek, programs that encourage the marking of personal property with personal identification numbers for the prevention of theft and the identification and recovery of stolen property. Individuals participating in Operation Identification are advised to mark their social insurance numbers on valuable personal items. In Operation Protek, only those who do not have driver's licence numbers are advised to mark items with social insurance numbers.

> Denial of the use of the Social Insurance Number or any restrictions imposed on its use in this manner would serve as a severe setback to Operation Identification, and it would compel the police community to develop new systems. This would be wasteful and costly. The program has been long established and considerable funding by the Solicitor General's Ministry has already gone into Youth Corps projects in communities to assist in its promotion and development. As it is now constituted, the program has the support of other police organizations as well and CACP strongly urges that nothing be done in respect to the Social Insurance Number that would in any way interfere with its continued use in Operation Identification. (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police)

> Nous croyons donc que l'on devrait faciliter l'accès aux informations pouvant permettre de relier le propriétaire d'un bien volé à partir de son numéro d'assurance sociale. Actuellement, les policiers font face à de nombreuses difficultés pour obtenir ces informations, ce qui se trouve a pénaliser injustement le propriétaire de biens que ne détient pas de permis de conduire ou a choisi d'identifier plutôt ses biens à partir de son numéro d'assurance sociale.
> Nous recommandons donc que des liens soient établis entre le Gouvernement fédérale et notre corps de police afin de féliciter la transmission d'informations pour le plus grand bénéfice des citoyens. (le Service de Police de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal)

The use of social insurance numbers in credit records was opposed in a number of letters and briefs. The briefs from organizations opposed to this use came not only from unions and voluntary organizations but from professional associations, trade associations and corporations. Briefs from credit bureaux written in defence of using the number in credit records pointed out that these records are already subject to provincial legislation. The briefs from credit bureaux also pointed out that the numbers are used in credit records for the same reasons they are used elsewhere:

> There are two main identifiers in our system S.I.N. and name. Accuracy cannot be obtained by name only. Our records contain many similar files such as father and son with the same name, living at the same address and (quite often with our large industries) have the same place of employment. To prevent errors in such cases is difficult. A search of telephone or city directories will reveal people with identical names, on the same street or even living in the

> same apartment buildings. We use the social insurance number as an account number assigned to each particular consumer. This method guarantees the accuracy the consumer demands. Accuracy can never be obtained from name alone. A further benefit to the consumer is the ability of social insurance numbers to identify fraudulent credit applications and cheques. We have documented many cases where a number of consumers have used aliases in order to obtain goods or services but when a social insurance number is requested they give the correct one which reveals their true identity. The reduction of bad debts from our system is evident and of course this helps to control prices. (Credit Bureau of Hamilton, Ontario)

> [SINs are used]...internally solely to help identify a consumer in Twin Cities Credit Bureau records. We are neither able nor attempt to obtain any more information from our business references or other sources with a SIN number than we can get by name. The significant difference is that the SIN number is a positive identifier and a name is not. (Twin Cities Credit Bureau, Halifax-Dartmouth, Nova Scotia)

Objections to the use of the social insurance number based on religious beliefs were presented by, among others, the Mennonite Central Committee (Ontario) on behalf of the Old Order Mennonite and Amish Groups of Ontario. The brief reads as follows:

> Before setting forth our concerns about the Social Insurance Number, we would like to indicate our high respect for government and its various institutions, our gratitude for the peace and freedoms which we have enjoyed in Canada for many

generations, and our willingness to contribute to the general well-being of Canada. We pray regularly for our government. We are grateful also for this opportunity to present our concerns about the Social Insurance Number.

Our concern about the Social Insurance Number (S.I.N.) is one aspect of our more general desire to avoid close integration with the larger society. This desire comes from our understanding of our religion as requiring as a general, community-oriented, way of life, not only acceptance of certain beliefs or attendance at church on Sundays. By becoming a member of our religious communities, a person accepts the responsibility of caring for other members and their families in the various social and economic areas of life. We see these as religious responsibilities. We do not see how we can delegate them to the larger secular society around us.

We believe this to be a valid interpretation of the Bible, (Galatians 6:2; I Timothy 5:8; II Corinthians 6:17; John 17:16; James 1:27), however, we do not argue with those who interpret the Scriptures in a different way. We believe too that our concerns rise out of our long history. When the Mennonite church began, some 450 years ago, there was a strong emphasis that our religion was to be a community oriented way of life somewhat separate from the larger society. At first this was viewed with much suspicion by the governments of the time. As a result there was a great deal of persecution.

Among the early rulers who granted religious freedom was William of Orange. He ruled in the seventeenth century, first in the Netherlands and later in England. During that time there appeared another defender of religious freedom in William Penn. He founded the colony of Pennsylvania which then became the home for many of our forebearers. When some of our people began to move north to Canada, late in the eighteenth century, the provisions for religious freedom continued. In 1793, the first Parliament of Upper Canada enacted a law which promised exemption from military service to Mennonites, Quakers, and Tunkers. This provision met a severe test in the War of 1812, and later also in other wars. But the principle continued even in World War II, when many of our young men served in an Alternative Service Program.

The interaction between our way of life and that of the larger Canadian society has become more complex since the second world war. However, our position has remained quite clear, we believe. Legislation for Family Allowances was enacted, but our people do not accept these benefits. The same is true for Old Age Security. However, we do not object to supporting these programs with taxes. We believe they are helpful to others.

In the area of education there was a major change around 1960 when the small rural schools were consolidated into larger town schools. To send our children to such larger schools would orient them away from our way of life, we felt.

When they entered into lengthy discussions with the government of Ontario with the result that we now operate about 40 small schools in our own communities, at our own expense, under the general supervision of the government.

Another major point of contention was the Canada Pension Plan. It came into effect in 1966. We did not want to contribute to this because, unlike other welfare programs, this was an insurance program. The payment required from each person with an income would accumulate and build up an equity for that person in accordance with the amount that he had paid in. We do not participate in any insurance programs, not even those for hospitalization and medicare. We felt that if our people participated in the C.P.P. then their sense of loyalty to the church would gradually weaken. It would undermine the way of life which we see as an integral part of our religion.

Because of our concern we made numerous petitions to the government. For a number of years it seemed as if the law could not be changed. At this we considered, with great reluctance, the possibility of looking for a homeland in another country. Fortunately, in December of 1971, the government promised to introduce legislation to exempt us from the C.P.P. In 1974 it was passed by Parliament. The exemption was based on evidence that on the basis of the tenets of our religion we opposed the acceptance of benefits from all insurance programs whether public or private, that we provided adequately for the needs of our

people through our own methods, and that an applicant was indeed a member of one of our groups.

We have sought these and other exemptions because of our conviction about our way of life. We believe it to be God's will for us. We have followed it for generations, indeed centuries. We believe too that it has not been harmful to Canada. We are very grateful to the governments, federal and provincial, for giving us the various exemptions.

Our concern about the Social Insurance Number does not come from a belief that the number is inherently evil. But we see it as one further item which would tie us to the larger society. We expressed our concerns about the S.I.N. when we made our petitions regarding the Canada Pension Plan. We thought, for a while, that our exemption from the C.P.P. would resolve most of the problems with the S.I.N. too. Gradually, however, it came into wider use.

Of particular concern to us is its use by Revenue Canada. For a number of years now there have been very considerable difficulties in processing our Income tax returns because of the government's insistence that we use the S.I.N. We are also concerned that banks and other financial institutions seem to require it for some of our transactions with them and that some of the small industries where some of our young men take employment occasionally also ask for it.

Recently there has been a significant modification in Revenue Canada's insistence that we use the

> S.I.N. in filing our tax returns. It appears now that the discussions, with Revenue Canada which have been underway for several years, may lead in a mutually satisfactory arrangement. Whatever the final outcome of those discussions, we would like to ask that there be a provision in the law so that a person cannot be required to use the S.I.N. if it is against the religion of the group to which that person belongs. We would be willing to enter into more detailed discussions with regard to the precise methods whereby the government could regulate such exemptions.
>
> In conclusion, we want to reaffirm that for us this is a question of freedom for religion, even though to others it may not appear that way. We would ask the government to respect our understanding of what is religious. We believe that ways can be found to accommodate our concerns without a significantly detrimental effect on Canada. We herewith ask the government to do so.

Finally, the briefs advocating measures to protect privacy or to restrict social insurance number use offered a wide range of recommendations. It is impossible to include them all and it is difficult even to summarize them. A representative selection of the comments and recommendations follows.

Among the comments and recommendations in a brief from the Canadian Labour Congress were the following:

> The desire on the part of record-keepers to maximize efficiency is certainly understandable. However, we must consider the balance between convenience and the privacy of the individual. A free and democratic

society must be willing to devise administrative methods which allow for the retention and protection of the right to privacy. The goals of convenience and efficiency can in most cases be met reasonably without recourse to S.I.N.s.

Central to this task would be a policy of diversification of identifying numbers. While file numbers may be necessary to both public and non-governmental enterprises, these numbers need not correspond to S.I.N.s....

We are not suggesting that there is a sinister plot to employ computer technology so as to deprive us of our privacy. Rather, computer data banks storing vast amounts of personal information are easily tapped and linked. Access to these data banks is necessarily quite wide, and not all persons with such access are sensitive to the importance of confidentiality, and to the spin-off effects of passing certain information from one repository to another. Then, illicit tampering increases the danger of data linkage. Accordingly, a national information security policy must be devised to protect the confidentiality of personal data....

Many of the problems arising from S.I.N. use are due to lack of awareness of the threat to privacy rights which S.I.N.s pose, both on the part of S.I.N. holders and on the part of people requesting and handling S.I.N.s. Accordingly, we urge that a programme of public education with respect to this issue be undertaken....

The [Canadian Human Rights] Commission might consider, as part of its community participation function, receiving complaints regarding S.I.N. abuse among private parties....

Commission experience with S.I.N. in the non-governmental sector, through conferences, discussion, mediation, etc. should periodically be made the subject of reports on non-governmental S.I.N. use....

...persons requesting S.I.N.s should be legally required to inform the S.I.N. holder as to whether disclosure is legally mandatory.

The above proposals, regarding non-governmental use of S.I.N.s must be seen in the context of continuing steps towards correcting S.I.N. abuses. Prohibitions and restrictions on S.I.N. use outside of government must of course be formulated with due consideration of the complexities involved. These complexities should not, however, be allowed to dictate a hands-off attitude. Unacceptable S.I.N. use outside of government must be rationally phased out....

...Henceforth any government agency which wishes to embark upon S.I.N. use should be required to request approval from cabinet. The request should be made public, and there should be a period of time sufficient to allow for public reaction....

While we appreciate the practical difficulties that a thoroughgoing and immediate de-S.I.N.-ification programme [in government] would entail, we recommend that, as a minimum, a review system be established. Some body independent of government (perhaps the Human Rights Commission or a subcommittee thereof) should be endowed with explicit jurisdiction to review existing government use of S.I.N. which goes beyond the original pensions, U.I.C. and tax purposes.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada recommended that:

> ...a full Parliamentary investigation be made into the current use of Social Insurance Numbers by both Government and independent agencies with a view to initiating legislation to control the exchange of computerized data under S.I.N.'s between government departments and/or any part of the private sector.

The Civil Liberties Association, National Capital Region, advocated the following measures:

1. All institutions that collect information for and/or about individuals should be licensed and then employees given specialized training. The licensing system would be used to institute standards of information handling and confidentiality while simultaneously providing the sanctions for enforcement.

2. All data bank licenses and links should be approved in advance by a Data Inspection Board that would require the sending institution and the receiving institution to have permission from each person whose personal infor ation is involved in the transaction.

3. Forms that collect personal information, even as innocuous as name and address, would be required to have a statement that the information will be used only for the purposes stated thereon, and only for a period not to exceed one month to five years depending on the conditions of the institution's license (and based on the type of information being requested).

4. All such forms being used must be approved in advance so that each piece of information requested is proper and is related to the institution's needs. This would not only allow the exclusion of questions asking for the identification number of other institutions, but also eliminate questions which are within the precluded grounds of discrimination of the Human Rights Code.

5. The forms should be accompanied by an explanation sheet that will provide reasons for the form and the questions included. This should be coupled to a provision that copies of all forms be supplied at cost to the individual for his/her records.

6. All data linkages that occur (presumably only those permitted by the Data Inspection Board) would be recorded and would be accessible to the individual concerned and be corrected or expunged according to the need and the regulations.

7. Any detrimental decision reached by any institution using personal information provided by or about an individual must be consented to in writing by the individual, with an offer to the individual to see his/her files. This would end the practice of citizens being deprived of any resource without knowing the reason, although it would be difficult for either side to prove that the reason provided was really the reason upon which the decision was based.

8. The abolition of the concept of social insurance number or any other identifier number scheme that has personal information built into it.

9. There shall be penalities for violations of the above provisions.

10. These penalties would be publicized and aid in the restricted use of identifier number schemes.

On an interim basis, we advocate that a freeze against any further extension of the use of social insurance numbers be imposed and that we begin taking the necessary steps to start restricting social insurance number usage to its original intent (e.g. U.I.C.-C.P.P. programs -- period.)

The Consumers' Association of Canada suggested as follows:

Placing restrictions on the use of SIN's will not provide consumers with a guarantee that their right to retain and disclose private information selectively, will be restored. Restrictions are, however, a necessary prerequisite for that process and should be instituted without delay. Concurrent policies and legislation should be instituted, including:

1. Privacy legislation defining the SIN as personal information;

2. Freedom of Information legislation, granting individuals access to all personal information pertaining to themselves, subject to Parliamentary and judicial restrictions;

3. A public review of computer security systems in both the public and private sectors should be initiated without delay. The ease with which computer systems and codes have been broken and accessed in the past points to the need for adequate safeguards and monitoring procedures.

4. The establishment of different and non comparable numbering systems (if numbering systems are required) for at least financial and health files in both the private and public sector.

These and similar policies should be instituted as part of an ongoing review and debate of invasion of privacy conditions in Canada.

Specific SIN Recommendations

1. CAC strongly recommends that any permissible use of social insurance numbers be the result of legislation following full parliamentary debate.

2. CAC urges the federal government to enact legislation which would restrict the use of the SIN to the social programmes of the federal government. All other government and private use of SIN should be restricted.

3. It is recommended that the government departments which have been granted a statutory license to request a SIN, be required to inform individuals that they have a legislative authority to do so.

4. CAC recommends that a government department that has the authority to request a SIN, be required to advise the individual whether or not benefits can be refused or penalities imposed on an individual who refuses disclosure.

5. CAC recommends that the statutory programmes which require SIN disclosure, be reviewed periodically to determine if the SIN disclosure requirement is still necessary and that there has been

no resulting SIN use situations that are outside parliament's initial intent.

6. It is recommended that the government develop guidelines and regulations that protect an individual's right to privacy in private sector SIN use situations sanctioned by parliament. Any private sector misuse of SIN's should be prohibited by law and subject to criminal penalty.

7. CAC recommends that Canadian residents be given the statutory authority to have their personal SIN expunged from any file, whether government or private, that does not have a statutory right to contain it.

Imperial Oil Limited recommended that:

1) S.I.N.'s should only be used for purposes in keeping with the original intent of the S.I.N. program. These numbers should only be used for direct transactions between the federal government and corporations, organizations or individuals.

2) S.I.N.'s should not be used as a data linkage device for interactions between various bodies outside the federal government. There is no reason to curtail the use of S.I.N. as a data retrieval device on an <u>internal</u> basis, but, S.I. numbers should not be exchanged between private information systems. For example, these numbers should not be used for consumer credit reporting or tracking health insurance or benefit plan accounts.

3) Employees should be made aware of the uses which their employer has for S.I. numbers, and the reasons for such use.

4) Internal availability of S.I. numbers should be strictly controlled to prevent unnecessary disclosure.

5) Voluntary guidelines incorporating the above recommendations are preferable to legislative interventions, which could become extremely complex. We appreciate that some companies and organizations will need time to convert their existing systems and procedures, and we feel that this costly process should not be made more burdensome by excessive government intervention. Guidelines would be predicated on the assumption that the protection of individual privacy is of as much concern to responsible corporations and organizations as it is to individuals.

The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America wrote that there is a need for legislation to:

1. Clearly limit the use of Social Insurance Numbers to federal government Social Insurance and taxation requirements.

2. Ban the use of Social Insurance Numbers as an identification code in all business and institutional records.

3. Require that all business and institutional records that use Social Insurance Numbers as identification be changed to a new coding system as quickly as possible (say one year) discarding S.I.N.s where not required in records and application forms.

4. Ban the use of Social Insurance Numbers for casual identification and issue numbers only when a person enters the labour force.

5. Allow individuals the right to verify personal information stored in computers.

6. Provide for stiff penalties for failure to comply with the foregoing.

The Vancouver Board of Trade submitted the following recommendations:

1. The Vancouver Board of Trade supports the responsible use of the Social Insurance Number as an additional identifier, but believes that Parliament should enact comprehensive legislation to protect the privacy of individuals.

2. The Board believes that legislating restrictions on the use of Social Insurance Numbers as an identifier would not necessarily be in the best interests of the Canadian public since it would give Canadians a false sense of security, thereby distracting them from the central issue of the protection of privacy.

3. The Board of Trade recommends that Government institutions and private sector organizations be prohibited from denying a benefit or imposing a penalty because of an individual's refusal to disclose his or her Social Insurance Number, except in those instances where the disclosure of a Social Insurance Number is required under a Federal or Provincial statute.

The Halifax Board of Trade provided these comments:

> We believe any move to curtail the use of Social Insurance Numbers would be a retrograde step:
>
> a) Diminishing speed and accuracy, inherent to good service to the consumer;
>
> b) Wasting the heavy investment already made for these reasons and creating further considerable costs which, when passed on to the consumer, would contribute to the inflationary spiral.

In the area of medical health care, several briefs from individuals and organizations dealt at length with the absolute need for confidentiality of sensitive medical and health care data if the privacy of individuals is to be respected. The prevalent concern expressed in these briefs was that the use of the social insurance number in medical records may prejudice this confidentiality. Correspondents expressed the fear that computer data-linkage to other sets of records could easily be accomplished using the social insurance number as the key and, therefore, they prefer that each disparate set of medical and health records have a separate numbering system.

On the other hand, many comprehensive briefs were received from government and private organizations, also involved in health care fields, extolling the positive value of using the unique identifying features of the social insurance number as an effective tool in research and epidemiological studies conducted by the government and the private sector.

Two such briefs highlighting the issues involved in such studies and use of the social insurance number in these areas were received from Dr. Howard B. Newcombe. Dr. Newcombe has been involved in medical research for several years and his submissions are quoted in full as follows:

SUBMISSION

to the CANADA SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER STUDY

on DETECTING DELAYED EFFECTS ON HEALTH --The Value of the S.I. Number in Large-Scale Health Follow-up

by Howard B. Newcombe

ABSTRACT

Pressure to conduct large-scale follow-up studies of those exposed, in the workplace and elsewhere, to cancer causing agents and other harmful substances with delayed effects, is likely not only to continue but to increase in the future. The reason is that the public, those responsible for safety standards, and especially those who are themselves exposed (including organized labour which represent many of them) all want to know the extent of the delayed risks. Use of the Social Insurance Number as an aid to follow-up could enable such health studies to be carried out in a more cost-effective manner, and in some situations which studies might otherwise not be attempted at all.

Obstacles to the use of the S.I. Number, where it could appropriately be employed, would not only serve poorly the cause of health protection, but also the cause of privacy. The reason is that, by perpetuating a dependence on the more familiar and more revealing personal identifiers (names, birth dates, etc.), as the means by which follow-up is achieved, when a non-revealing numerical identifier might be substituted, one increases unnecessarily the opportunities for inadvertent, casual or malicious disclosures of private information.

Since health follow-up is needed, and will go on as long as people are worried about cancer and other delayed diseases, appropriate use of the S.I. Number for the purposes of such studies could have the effect of protecting both privacy and health at the same time.

INTRODUCTION

Delayed effects on human health, as for example industrially caused cancer, can in general only be detected and measured by following up individual people to see what eventually becomes of them. The Social Insurance Number system is sometimes of use as an aid in the follow-up process, under conditions which guard the privacy of the individual and provide the investigator either with bulk statistics in a form suitable for analysis or with the analyses themselves carried out to his specifications.

What is not generally recognized is that the relatively low levels of individual risk, about which the public is so often concerned, usually require for their detection that very large numbers of "exposed" and "control" individuals (e.g. 10,000 to 100,000 or more) be followed over a period of two or three decades to determine when they die, what they die of, and whether they contracted cancer or some other disease of special concern. Thus, it is frequently exceedingly difficult to make such investigations cost-effective so that they will be undertaken at all, and as a result very real risks to health can remain undetected or unquantified. It follows that there is a need to use all possible aids, including electronic computers, linkage with existing routine records pertaining to health and, where appropriate, the S.I. Number.

When reviewing the legitimate uses of the S.I. Number, it would seem

appropriate therefore to consider whether such applications to health problems of an essentially statistical nature, and their investigation by epidemiological means, are to be regarded as important as a means of protecting human lives. A second question for consideration has to do with whether use of the S.I. Number in such studies constitutes a threat to the privacy of the individual, in the sense that it might lead to a release of confidential information, e.g. from health records, in a manner not covered by existing legislation governing the use of such records. And an opposite possibility must also be considered, namely that use of the S.I. Number in such work, by reducing dependance on other more familiar and revealing personal identifiers (including names, birth dates and such) could serve to protect rather than threaten personal privacy.

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Certain agreed-upon principles concerning the rights of the individual will necessarily govern discussions of these matters. Three such principles are suggested here as of particular relevance.

These are:

1) The right to protection against embarrassement or harm due to loss of privacy.

2) The right to know the risks to health and life, especially in the workplace. (And if nobody knows, the right to have them investigated by the most efficient means.)

3) The right to standards of health protection based on the best knowledge which can reasonably be obtained.

Collectively, the public appears to place about equal emphasis on all three of the above rights. However, in matters relating to risks in the workplace, it would seem only proper that those who are at greatest risk should be listened to most carefully.

The implied responsibility to find out the risks to health, where these are not already known, is perhaps the most difficult to define. Such responsiblity presumably falls on both management and government where it is the workplace that is involved. Although the degree of responsibility may be smaller where the likelihood of detection of a risk is low and the cost of investigation is high, this would not always be true. If, for example, the means exist for improving the cost-effectiveness of detection (as through the use of mechanized files and more convenient personal identifiers with which to follow up the individuals at risk) the reasons for failing to monitor for possible delayed hazards to health become less clear.

The present investigation may wish to consider whether the rights to protection of privacy, and protection of health, represent competing principles that compromise each other, or whether they are mutually compatible so that both privacy and health can be efficiently protected without compromise. If, as has been suggested somewhat figuratively, cancer in particular should be viewed as the "ultimate invasion of human privacy" the two sorts of risk would thereby be put on a more nearly equal footing, at least in as much as they are equally to be feared. But the view which will be proposed is that use of the S.I. Number, appropriately and on a sufficient scale, could serve to avoid compromises with respect to human health and safety, while at the same time reducing the

dependence on follow-up procedures that offer greater possibilities for loss of personal privacy.

HEALTH FOLLOW-UP AND THE S.I. NUMBER SYSTEM

Canada already possesses two major facilities for carrying out follow-up studies of delayed hazards to health. These facilities are unique in the world and have been used extensively under conditions which guard the privacy of the individual. The Social Insurance Number is not an integral part of either of these two facilities, but both of them would become more versatile and efficient if it were. The facilities themselves have been used to follow-up uranium and other underground miners for lung cancer, nickel workers, including nickel sinter workers, likewise for lung cancer, and tuberculosis patients for carcinogenic effects of multiple fluoroscopies and of the drug isoniazide. Plans exist for a study of radiation workers, based on these facilities (1), and there is a continuing demand for their use to determine the levels of safety and the adequacy of the standards of protection against delayed effects on health in various other industries.

The first of these facilities is the Mortality Data Base, which permits computerized searches for the death records of named individuals, throughout Canada back to 1950. The records belong to the provinces and the facility is operated by Statistics Canada, with provincial approval, for the purposes of appropriate studies under individual. Information is released to investigators in the form of bulk statistics suitable for analysis, or as the results of such analyses carried out "in-house". The Social Insurance Number is not used in the operation of this facility. although many provinces ask for it on their death

registrations and the searching could frequently be made more efficient if it were entered regularly into the files. (Recently the United States has undertaken to create a "National Death Index", on magnetic tape, which does make use of their Social Security Number. Unlike Canada's Mortality Data Base, the American "Index" lacks the cause of death, and includes only those deaths from 1979 onward.)

The second Canadian follow-up facility is the National Cancer Incidence Reporting system, which is based on information provided by the provinces from their cancer registers. This centralized facility was developed by Statistics Canada in collaboration with, and at the request of, the National Cancer Institute of Canada. The centralized system was designed to provide for inclusion of the Social Insurance Number where available, but since only Prince Edward Island asks for and obtains it routinely for their cancer register it is of little practical use in carrying out the searches. Moreover, in general, less attention tends to be given to the adequacy and uniformity of the personal identifying information contained in special disease registers than is the case for the vital registration system, presumably because of the more frequent legal uses to which the vital records are put. Thus, more instances of mistaken or uncertain identity may be expected when searching the cancer records than is the case for searches of the mortality files. Moreover, duplicate registrations of the same individuals, from different provinces, undoubtedly exist in the centralized files. If the S.I. Numbers were available for all registrants, duplicate entries could be tidied up in a very simple manner. More importantly, the system would provide substantially greater efficiency in the follow-up of

industrial groups for whom the Social Insurance Numbers are known, as when seeking to detect an elevated risk of cancer which would be expected to extend into the post-retirement years.

To use either of these facilities for studies of delayed occupationally caused diseases, name rosters of past (and/or present) employees must be assembled in a form which adequately identifies individuals so that cases of mistaken identity are rare. Since employees tend to move from one employer to another, job histories are frequently difficult to compile, even where all the facts are known, because names, birth dates and such are so frequently inaccurately or inconsistently reported on separate occasions. Presence of the Social Insurance Numbers, along with the other identifiers, provides about the only efficient means of compiling tidy work histories of a kind appropriate to serve as "starting-point" records in any large-scale epidemiological follow-up study. Since S.I. Numbers are already known to employers for payroll purposes, no release of personal information is involved in their use for the preparation of name rosters and work histories. If there were a ban that excluded incorporation of the S.I. Numbers into the files that were to be used for epidemiological studies of risks, the effect would be to decrease the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the process by which delayed risks may be detected. In practice, fewer of the potentially possible risk studies would be considered worth pursuing, risks that might otherwise have been detected would not be, and safety standards would in such instances not be based on the best information potentially available.

PUBLIC DEMANDS FOR ASSESSMENT OF DELAYED RISKS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL FOLLOW-UP

Pressure to carry out health follow-up studies of industrial workers, for the purpose of assessing delayed occupational risks, has come in part from organized labour, in part from writers of semi-popular books which seek to inform the public about hazards in the workplace that have not been promptly and adequately investigated in the past and in part from technical groups concerned with the efficiency of the process by which delayed harm to health may be detected. Those who have advocated use of the Social Insurance Numbersystem to improve the cost-effectiveness of the follow-up process, to the point at which needed studies are likely to be viewed as worth carrying out, tend to be technical people concerned with risk detection. Although the unions have a strong interest both in the safety of their members and the confidentiality of any personal information concerning them, they do not appear to have opposed the use of the S.I. Number in health studies, and they have strongly urged that health follow-up be carried out.

In 1975, the National (i.e. Canadian) Policy Conference of the United Steelworkers of America unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon federal and provincial governments to

> "enact legislation providing for... A complete work history of every individual worker which, coupled with a complete medical profile, will enable us to quickly identify and eliminate potentially hazardous working conditions"

And in the CBC radio news at one o'clock on February 28 of this year Mr. Andy Leroy of the United Steelworkers of

America was quoted as commenting favourably on an Ontario Ministry of Labour study of mortality among some 30,000 of the province's present and past underground miners. The study will make use of Canada's computerized Mortality Data Base and is expected to take three years to complete. Moreover, an essentially similar follow-up study of mortality among nickel workers in the Sudbury area, being carried out under contract with McMaster University, was the outcome of a union-management agreement to allocate funds to a joint committee on occupational health, which subsequently decided to spend the money in this way. It is common practice in studies of these kinds to start with employee name rosters in which the Social Insurance Numbers (for all but those early workers who retired before these numbers were allocated) are used to ensure against duplicate entries, and to bring together parts of any work histories which involve more than one employer.

Authors of semi-popular works on health hazards in the workplace have likewise pressed for greater attention to the early detection of delayed risks to health, using methods such as were employed to detect cancer induction in the asbestos industry, the woodworking industry, and various chemical industries. The titles of three such books currently being sold are:

- "The Cancer Connection"
  (L. Agran; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977)
- "The Politics of Cancer"
  (S.S. Epstein; Garden City: Anchor Books, 1979)
- "Dying for a Living"
  (L. Tataryn; Canada: Deneau and Greenberg, 1979)

Books like these tend to point a finger at both management and government for

alleged tardiness in carrying out appropriate studies.

PUBLISHED OPINIONS ON THE USE OF THE S.I. NUMBER IN HEALTH STUDIES

The value of having a system of unique, personal, lifetime identifying numbers, which can be used for the purpose of health follow-up, has long been recognized. Back in 1946 when the Canadian birth registration numbers were tidied up to facilitate verification of claims for family allowances, it was hoped by some that the "birth number" would be widely used, especially on health records, to permit follow-up statistics to be gathered pertaining to health problems. This never materialized, due probably to popular fears of follow-up for any purpose. Only now is there an increasing realization that, in general, without follow-up one cannot know consequences.

Introduction of the Social Insurance Number lead to discussions of its merits for lifetime health studies of individuals. The two chief reservations concerning it had to do with a) the failure to assign it routinely to infants (except later in Prince Edward Island), and b) confusion over the sorts of controls needed to prevent improper kinds of linkage and loss of confidentiality. The need for a personal identifier for health studies was widely recognized however. The Medical Research Council Report (3), for example, recommended:

> "That, to make the health related records more readily linkable, a personal identity number should be permanently assigned at birth to each individual.
>
> This number should be one that is likely to be widely

> employed, is known or readily available to individuals, and accepted for use by all provinces." (Page 14 of the Report.)

The value of such a number for health studies would depend much on its adoption on medical care, hospital, and vital records throughout all provinces.

Other technical committees were in general agreement. The main point of difference had to do with whether to recommend adoption of a personal numbering system for use only on health records, or to recommend that the Social Insurance Numbers be assigned at birth and used on health records as well as for other purposes. The first of these two options became less attractive when it was clear that the provincial health care insurance systems were quite unlikely to agree on a common lifetime account number, which would be portable across Canada. And the second became more attractive as emphasis on the risks of cancer induction in the workplace grew and because of the availability of the S.I. Numbers from employees' payroll records.

Recommendations favouring use of the S.I. Number of an individual on his health records appeared in 1970 in a "Report on the Activities of the Ontario Council of Health" (4). Extracts from these recommendations (pages 104, 108 and 109 of the Report) read as follows:

> "That insured individuals... be identified by a number (or numbers) common to all systems... Such numbering systems could be based on the Social Insurance Number."

> "That the Department stimulate, assist in or conduct epidemiological...

> studies of the health of occupational groups..."
>
> "That... the health statistics system ultimately acquire the capacity for complete data linkage, together with the technical and legal means to ensure that individual privacy is adequately protected."
> "That the Department initiate discussions with other departments of the Ontario Government and with the Federal Government concerning the feasibility of giving to a single national governmental office the responsibility for issuing unique individual numbers to every member of the population regardless of age or employment status."

Essentially similar recommendations emerged in a detailed report prepared in 1974 by the Management Consulting Services Division of the Ontario Government, entitled "A Study of the Implications of Using a Personal Identifier in the Ministry of Health" (5). One of these recommendations is that:

> "The Ministry of Health adopt and standardize the use of the Social Insurance Number as a unique personal identifier for all of its people oriented programs including the Ontario Health Insurance Plan."

So far only Prince Edward Island has adopted, for its health care insurance plan, the Social Insurance Number of the individual (as distinct from that of the head of family), thus creating the possibility of readily following the health histories of individuals when questions arise concerning their long-term safety.

No one has seriously argued against the need for individual follow-up where delayed risks to health are suspected, or that small studies are adequate, or that inefficient procedures are to be preferred. The real issue is whether large-scale follow-up, using computers to carry out what would otherwise be slow clerical operations, increases the threat to privacy, or decreases it. A look at the recent past may be useful in this connection.

THE MANUAL ALTERNATIVE

Follow-up of individuals by epidemiologists has until recently been a largely manual and clerical operation. It has used a diversity of source record files, local, regional and national. And often the tracing of people has involved alsoletters sent through the mails and visits to institutions, physicians, municipal offices and former neighbours. Only thus could one find out whether the individuals were dead or alive, sick or well. Such studies were necessariy small, or else very expensive.

A list of such potential sources for follow-up, prepared for the purpose of assisting those who worked on an American study of toxic goitre and its treatment, will serve to emphasize the difference in labour and cost which the recent introduction of searchable, computerized files has made. It will also emphasize the extent to which personal information must be revealed to clerical support staff when the benefits of numerical identifiers and mechanized data processing are not available. The local resources listed include: city directories, telephone company, post office, board of education, voters registration lists, social service exchange, marriage and divorce records, and group hospitalization. The state and federal resources included: bureau

of motor vehicles, retail credit bureau, veterans administration, Department of Defence Locator System, Social Security Administration, internal revenue, census bureau, and death certificates. Details of how to tap each of these sources are given in a mimeographed document ("Resources for Locating Patients". Prepared by the staff of the Cooperative Thyrotoxicosis Therapy Follow-up Study, Washington: U.S. Public Health Service, Draft of Nov. 2, 1962).

The possibilities for inadvertent or malicious breaches of confidentiality are clearly considerable where such a diversity of source records must be examined by human clerks. Such methods contrast sharply with the searching by computer of a much smaller number of very large files, within the walls of an agency which already has custody of the files and responsibility for guarding the privacy of the individuals represented in them.

PRESENT TRENDS

The demands that government assist in the detection of delayed occupational risks to health will undoubtedly increase in the future. We live in a risk-conscious society, and those who are most at risk in the workplace hold that the only acceptable risk is zero risk. Furthermore, it is now more widely known that large follow-up studies are possible and, in many situations, appropriate. Because of these factors, the attention given to ensuring that they can be carried out cheaply and without threat to privacy is likely to continue.

In Canada, for studies using the death and cancer records, confidentiality is maintained by releasing only bulk statistics to the investigator, or the products from an in-house analysis carried out to the

specifications of the investigator. The confidentiality of the health records themselves is governed by various provincial and federal statistics acts and human rights acts, and provincial approval is required of the manner in which the death and cancer records are used.

In the case of the U.S. National Death Index, the rules governing confidentiality are somewhat different. Where an investigator presents the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) with a list of named individuals for whom dates and places of death are sought, the NCHS many release information about those identifiers on a death record which agreed with those pertaining to an individual on the list. Since such agreements could sometimes occur by chance, the two individuals would not necessarily be the same. However, the name of the state and the year of the death are also given to the investigator so that he may deal with the state registrar from there on. Where the Social Security Number of an individual is present on the investigator's list and also on the death record, and agrees, there will be little doubt that a correct match has been achieved, but the investigator will still need to get the cause of death from the state registrar.

The decision in the United States to set up the National Death Index is itself an indication of a trend. And in Canada, interest in making greater use of the Social Insurance Number is likely to continue. As recently as 1973, for example, the National Cancer Institute of Canada issued a policy statement on the matter, which read as follows:

> "That the National Cancer Institute of Canada considers that there is a need for a unique personal identification

> number for health records, and recommends that the method of choice is to adopt the Social Insurance Number for this purpose. This presumes that a practical method be found for allocating the Social Insurance Number to everyone." (From a letter of September 25, 1973 from Dr. A.B. Miller of NCIC to the Honourable Richard T. Potter, Minister of Health for Ontario.)

One further indication of current trends is worth quoting. In a recent editorial in the British Medical Journal (6) reference is made to a statement from an American source to the effect that:

> "...pressure was growing in Congress to remove some of the obstacles that the privacy act of 1974 had placed in the way of the solutions of environmental health problems by epidemiological means."

CONCLUSION

The safeguards to privacy that currently exist relate to the information content of the records that are most useful for studies of delayed risks to health, and not to the means by which this information is manipulated to produce the needed statistical products. However, the current trend away from manual clerical processing removes the sensitive personal information to a considerable extent away from human view.

If greater use were made of a non-revealing personal identifier, such as the Social Insurance Number, for health follow-up studies, this should further diminish the dependence on more familiar and revealing identifiers such

as names and birthdates(7). The trend in this direction should therefore serve to increase the efficiency with which both privacy and health may be protected.

A ban on the use of the S.I. Number for such follow-up could then not only delay understanding and control to major health problems, but force the use of the more revealing kinds of identifiers for follow-up when a non-revealing identifier would better serve the cause of privacy.

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

to the CANADA SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER STUDY

on S.I.N., LEGISLATION, AND THE NATIONAL DOSE REGISTRY -- Principles to do with "monitoring" long-term personal "commitments" in general

by Howard B. Newcombe

The effects of legislation restricting the use of the Social Insurance Number system, where some sort of lifetime personal identifier is legitimately required, are best illustrated with a few specific examples. Those which will be cited have to do with a) the changes in privacy legislation being brought forward by the previous government, b) the implications of these proposed changes as affecting the operation of the National Dose Registry for radiation workers, and c) certain general principles pertaining to personal identification wherever there is a long-term personal "commitment" of a sort that requires "monitoring". Before deciding in what manner use of S.I.N. is to be restricted in the future, it would seem prudent to consider whether an available alternative is in fact more acceptable.

LEGISLATION

Specifically, the changes in the Human Rights Act proposed by the previous government would have made it illegal to deny a service to an individual because of unwillingness to supply their S.I. Number. It was reasoned that this is "not the only way of uniquely identifying an individual". The statement is contained in a letter of November 30, 1979, from Mr. Perrin Beatty to Mr. Leonard Hopkins.

The application of this restriction to the National Dose Registry was referred to in the letter. However, no alternative form of personal identification was mentioned which would be both unique and acceptable.

NATIONAL DOSE REGISTRY

This Registry is designed to monitor the lifetime build-up of a "risk commitment" in each radiation worker, indicating the likelihoods of contracting work-induced cancer some decades later.

To avoid duplicate entries pertaining to the same individual, and to help piece together fragments of a personal dose history acquired under different employers, use is made of the Social Insurance Number. This is available from pay records in the case of workers in any large organization, but self-employed persons have to be asked for it.

Let us consider the effect of the restriction in the case of a not-so-hypothetical Mary Brown, who:

1) works as a summer student for Ontario Hydro and has her radiation dose history recorded in the NDR under her S.I.N.,

2) qualifies as a dentist, practices for a while and uses the services of the NDR to record the doses received from her X-ray machine, but declines to give her S.I.N.,

3) marries and becomes Mary Jones, gives up her practice temporarily but resumes it later under her married name, and again uses the record-keeping services of the NDR without divulging her S.I.N.

What options are open to the National Dose Registry? Under the proposed legislation it would be illegal for them to refuse the lifetime record-keeping service. And for them to provide an inferior service, e.g. a partial as distinct from a complete history, would almost certainly be viewed as an evasion of the law. But how can they bring the pieces together when a different identifier has been used?

Let us consider each of the alternative forms of identification and the possible objections to each. These might be summarized as follows:

1) S.I.N. (Social Insurance Number) --See above.

2) B.I.N. (Birth Identity Number -- Equally sensitive in the past. No check digit for accuracy.

3) D.L.N. (Drivers Licence Number) -- Not permanent.

4) Name and Birth Date -- Not unique.

5) Own plus Parental Info. (i.e. birth name, date, place; mother's maiden name; father's given names)

-- Invasion of privacy?
Not always consistently reported.

6) Birth Certificate (including B.I.N.) -- Invasion of privacy? Cumbersome.

Where protection of privacy is the aim, which alternative to S.I.N. does one choose? Those options that are almost as good, although legal under the proposed legislation, could be viewed as constituting an even greater invasion of (or threat to) privacy. In fact, no one of them is quite as good, for a variety of reasons, except perhaps the actual birth certificate.

To organize a file such as that of the National Dose Registry under a mixture of identifiers is hardly a solution. In the case of our Mary Brown, above, it does not solve the problem of bringing together her dose history as a dentist with that acquired as an Ontario Hydro summer student. The two parts might be equated on the basis of name and birth date, but the matching would be probabilistic and in a proportion of cases would be wrong. Whatever the law, she cannot be guaranteed as good a lifetime record-keeping service as she might have had if she were willing to supply her S.I.N.

If excessive efforts were made by the National Dose Registry to equal, without the S.I.N., the quality of service that could have been provided with it, the cost of the service would be substantially increased as a result. (Ad hoc and manual operations tend to be costly in an otherwise automated routine.) In a period of budgetary restraint, the possibility of having to discontinue the service altogether is everpresent. The extra cost could well tip the balance, and the result would be unfortunate for everybody.

Clearly, a good lifetime personal service cannot be guaranteed in the

absence of an acceptable, good, and uniform system of lifetime personal identifiers. A mix of identification systems would merely threaten the existence of the service itself.

LONG-TERM IDENTIFIERS FOR OTHER LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS

The foregoing deals with a particular case of a general principle. One cannot monitor a long-term personal "commitment" of any sort without an appropriate long-term personal identifier. The principle applies not only to "harm commitments" but to virtually any other kind of commitment into which an individual may choose to enter, including financial commitments. There are pitfalls in trusting to identifiers which are not unique or can change, and the privacy of innocent parties can be threatened wherever there is the possibility of mistaken identity.

A recent incident will illustrate this. A Mr. Walter Stewart of F P News Service was informed by a collection agency that his credit rating would suffer if he did not repay to the Royal Bank an overdraft incurred by a different Walter Stewart of E P News Service. Neither the bank nor the collection agency would positively clear the innocent Mr. Stewart's name, preferring to leave the matter unresolved because of the small amount of the debt. So Mr. Stewart published a half-page article on his experience, in the Ottawa Journal of March 22, 1980.

Mr. Stewart will undoubtedly be able to clear his name, but only because the S.I. Number of his namesake is known to the bank and is different from his own. Mr. Stewart quotes himself as saying to the collection agency "I thought SIN numbers were not for credit checks, but for limited government use", to which the agency replied "Would you

> rather have us still hassling you, or using the SIN number?" (My own bank does not ask for the S.I. Number but will accept a drivers licence as identification, and this can change with province of residence. As a result, if a namesake of mine were to default, I could be more vulnerable than Mr. Stewart.)
>
> Such consequences of mistaken identity can be unpleasant, and the S.I. Number can safeguard the innocent, but only in as much as its use is encouraged where personal long-term commitments are involved.

A brief received from the National Cancer Institute of Canada outlines this institution's position on the use of the social insurance number for cancer epidemiological studies. This submission, too, is quoted in full:

> VALUE OF UNIQUE PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS IN STUDIES OF CANCER EPIDEMIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL, AND OCCUPATIONAL CARCINOGENS
>
> A Position Statement adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Cancer Institute of Canada.
>
> In studying disease occurrence, for example, cancer in man, it is frequently important to assess the relevance of a suspected causative agent, such as a chemical to which a group of workers is exposed, a substance inhaled or ingested in certain occupational situations (asbestos), or an agent to which a number of people may be exposing themselves, which increases their risk of disease occurrence either alone or together with occupational factors (cigarette smoking). The most efficient mechanism for conducting such studies is to identify a large group of people exposed to the factor of interest (the test group) and a similar group of

individuals not so exposed (the control group), and follow both groups to see whether the disease experience in the test group is significantly greater than that of the control. Many studies use the general population for the control group. This is equally valid and may be more informative providing the extent to which factors which may change the subsequent disease experience of the test group, other than the factor of interest, can be identified and interpreted. Test groups may comprise workers in special industries exposed to a particular occupational hazard, individuals who may have been under medical care for a special illness or who received a particular form of treatment, and individuals identified by a special survey such as cigarette smokers, consumers of certain food-stuffs etc.

In the past, such studies inevitably had to be conducted by special mechanisms designed to follow all exposed persons in the test group individually to discover whether by the end point of the study, usually many decades after the entry of an individual into the test group, that person was still alive or whether he had died of any cause, and if so, what cause, and also whether or not at any time the individual had developed the disease of interest. The procedures necessary to do this become more and more complicated as time goes on, even if the individual does not change his residence, but as people often change occupation and places of residence, and retire if they survive to the normal retirement age, nearly all studies conducted in the past were faced with a loss of information and substantial expense.

More recently it has been recognized that much of the information which traditionally has been obtained by painstaking follow-up of the test group

over long periods of time is already being routinely collected for other purposes, such as through the National Vital Statistics Registration System and the Canada-wide recording of all newly diagnosed cases of cancer. However, a prerequisite to the exploitation of such information for purposes of cancer research is the ability to readily identify records pertaining to the same individuals in both the test group and the control group.

This matching up of different records relating to the same person is called record linkage. In the context of cancer epidemiology it implies bringing together records of people exposed to a suspect causative factor with other series of records such as reports of cancer cases and deaths from specified causes.

Before the advent of the computer, record linkage had to be carried out manually by clerks, or to a limited extent through the use of mechanical punch card equipment. Both these methods were relatively slow and costly and precluded wide scale exploitation of large data files. Now, largely as a result of technology developed by Canadian scientists, these records can be brought together in a computerized system much more rapidly and much more efficiently. This methodology is already in use in a number of studies which are being conducted in provincial registries and in Statistics Canada.

In the absence of unique personal identification numbers, the process of record linkage has to be carried out using as many different items of identification for an individual as are available in the source and end-point records. For death records this means: last name, first and middle names, maiden name or any other name change, full date of birth (day-month-year),

place of birth, marital status, residence and in some circumstances father's and mother's names. The necessity of having to employ a large number of discriminating items of information to establish linkages is costly, even with computers. Furthermore, some of these items are subject to change, for example, marital status and residence, and some are liable to error, for example, misspelling of names, error in recording date of birth, failure to record maiden name information or other name change. For common last names it may be found that a number of possible linkages are noted by the computer and this may make it very difficult to ensure an accurate link.

In some countries, particularly those in Scandinavia, each individual is uniquely identified by a number which usually carries within itself not only a mechanism to check its accuracy (a so-called check digit), but often date of birth information as well. In Canada, there is already in existence a numbering system which is admirably suited to provide a unique number to every individual in the country and to thus constitute the much needed unique identifier for all health records. This is the Social Insurance Number (S.I.N.). Unfortunately, at present these numbers are issued only when individuals require them for some occupational or other social insurance purpose. What is more, even where available they are not generally included on health documents, hence they do not appear in the documentation that leads to cancer registration, nor on death registration. Although the system of allocating these numbers in earlier years did make it possible for certain persons to obtain more than one number, improvements made in the management of the system now virtually preclude any chance of this happening.

The availabilty of a unique number, such as the S.I.N., for each individual in the country would be an enormous asset in occupational and other health studies which require observations of large population groups derived from multiple data sources and would be of particular relevance to cancer research. In recognition of this fact, the National Cancer Institute of Canada in September, 1973 adopted the following resolution:

> "The National Cancer Institute of Canada considers that there is need for a unique personal identification number for health records, and recommends that the method of choice is to adopt the social insurance number for this purpose. This presumes that a practical method be found for allocating the social insurance number to everyone."

Since that time, we understand that although a number of government bodies, both federal and provincial, accept the philosophy underlying this resolution, for political reasons, arising in particular from the adverse publicity about the dangers of computer systems and from widespread debate on the issue of personal confidentiality, no government action seems likely in the near future. However, it appears that this decision is being taken largely without discussion with the public or with interested organizations, and without full appreciation of the great significance of unique personal idenfication numbers to the health field. Further, it is possible to introduce safeguards to avoid unwarranted violation of privacy. The public is intensely concerned over environmental hazards and will support measures that promote their identification at the earliest possible moment so that remedial action can be taken. It is therefore appropriate that

interested national and provincial agencies review their position on such numbers and make recommendations as they see fit to both federal and provincial governments.

The National Cancer Institute of Canada, a voluntary agency affiliated to the Canadian Cancer Society, reaffirms its support of the principles underlying its September, 1973 resolution and urges all Provincial and Federal Departments concerned with this matter to work actively toward the implementation of the unique personal identifier for all Canadians.

2.2 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY - DEPARTMENTS SUBJECT TO PART IV OF THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

INTRODUCTION

Part of the mandate of this study was to determine the manner and extent of the use of the social insurance number within the federal government administration, including whether the number is used for data-linkage. It soon became apparent that the use of the social insurance number is widespread in many federal government programs. It is collected freely, used extensively and is exchanged in many inter-related programs.

To a large extent, the gathering and exchange of the social insurance number is conducted in accordance with law. In other areas, the number is used simply to facilitate identification of individuals. Also, in many instances the gathering of the social insurance number in one department or agency is determined by the programs of another.

Rather than lead the reader through the maze of uses of the number and the ways in which it is collected, stored, retrieved and circulated within federal administration, representative uses of the social insurance number follow under general headings:

(a) federal government legal requirements
(b) privacy legislation, Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act
(c) use by departments and agencies subject to Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The following eight federal acts require individuals to provide their social insurance numbers:

Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971;
Immigration Act, 1976;
Income Tax Act;
Canada Pension Plan;
Old Age Security Act;
Family Allowances Act, 1973;
Canada Elections Act, and
Canadian Wheat Board Act.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT, 1971

According to the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) was given the responsibility for administering the social insurance number system. The basic components are the registration process and the maintenance of the Social Insurance Register.

The CEIC is obligated, under the Unemployment Insurance Act to devise a number system suitable for use in filing, accounting and data processing. Each person occupied in insurable employment will receive a number from this system and a card containing that number and his or her name. Subsequently, the CEIC is to keep a register of all these numbers and the information gathered in the process of issuing them. This means that the information kept is that provided on the application for the number.

The number issued in this manner is called the social insurance number and is to be used "for any purpose for which a social insurance number is required" (section 125).

Subsection 126(1) of the Unemployment Insurance Act outlines what kinds of information may be kept in the Social Insurance Register. These are: the names of applicants; the names of those given a number with respect to the Canada Pension Plan; and the names of people who seek a number for other than employment reasons.

Upon approval of the Governor in Council, the Commission may make regulations concerning the registration, issuing, custody, production and use of social insurance number cards. As well the Commission looks after the replacement of social insurance cards that have been lost, destroyed or defaced.

The Commission may make available, to those it thinks appropriate, the information in the register for determining precise identification, or any other "effective use".

A new number can be assigned if, for example, a person's number is accidentally duplicated and assigned to someone else, causing personal embarrassment or hardship. There may be other circumstances, as well, in which the issuing of a new number would be desirable.

If a new social insurance number is given to a person, any other social insurance number previously obtained becomes void.

If more than one number has inadvertently been assigned to an individual, the Commission will determine which of the numbers is to be the official one. The remaining numbers then become void (section 126).

When a person's name changes, because of marriage or otherwise, he or she can apply to the Commission, within sixty days of such a change coming into effect, for a new social insurance number card in the new name. The number remains the same. The only such instance in which a new card would not be granted is if an application for a new card has already been made "to another authority empowered to receive such an application" (section 127).

A person who knowingly makes out an application for more than one social insurance number may be imprisoned for a maximum of one year or fined a maximum of $1000, or both. The same may result if a person uses another's social insurance number with the intention to deceive someone or if, without the authority of the Commission, someone tries to manufacture or duplicate a social insurance number card, apart from making a photocopy for record purposes (section 128).

An employer must keep records of its employees at its place of business, residence, or some other location designated by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. These records must include the social insurance number of each insured person so that the proper deductions and premiums can be calculated. Where an employer has failed to keep these records, the Minister may require them to be kept in such manner as the Minister specifies. Every employer keeps these records and account books until written permission is obtained from the Minister to destroy them. It is also necessary for the employer to maintain the material to verify the information on record (section 72).

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REGULATIONS

A person occupied in insurable employment who does not already have a social insurance number must apply for one within three days of becoming employed.

The application contains a request for the applicant's full name; name at birth if not the same as at the time of application, date of birth, place of birth, mother's family name at birth, father's given name, and proof of applicant's citizenship. If a person wishes to get a new card, because his or her card has been lost or destroyed, the same information is required. The person in the latter case must also provide the old number or, if it is not known, must provide a statement that he or she previously had a number (subsection 73(14)).

If a person is under 12 years of age the application shall be made by a parent or legal guardian of the person. An applicant who cannot sign may make his or her mark on the application in the presence of two witnesses who must sign (subsections 73(4), (5)).

In a province where social insurance registration occurs at birth, a designated government official, according to an agreement between CEIC and the province, can be empowered to sign the application (subsection 73(6)).

If a person is unwilling or unable to register, because of religious beliefs or other reasons, the Commission may on its own instance assign a number if, in its opinion, sufficient proof of identity is available (subsection 73(8)).

When a social insurance number application is made for a person who is neither a Canadian citizen nor a permanent resident, the Commission may require the applicant to show why a number is required. When numbers are issued to persons other than Canadian citizens or permanent residents they are prefaced with the digit "9". If the person subsequently becomes a citizen or permanent resident, the Commission, upon application, provides him or her with a new number commencing with a new initial digit. Conversely, if a non-citizen or non-permanent resident has inadvertently not been given a number beginning with the digit "9", the Commission will cancel the old, inaccurate number and provide a new one (subsections 73(9), (10), (11)).

Every employer is required to record a new employee'ssocial insurance number within the first three days of the employee's work. The new employee is obligated to provide the number within the first three days of a new job. If a new employee does not have a

number at the time of employment, one must be provided to the employer within three days after it has been acquired. If an employer cannot ascertain the new employee's social insurance number, it must report to the Commission within six days of the new person's employment (subsections 73(15)-(19)).

IMMIGRATION ACT, 1976

In accordance with this Act, the Minister of Employment and Immigration may order the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission to issue special social insurance numbers to people who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents. This number identifies the person as one who requires special permission to work in Canada.

CANADA PENSION PLAN

It is provided in this Act that a person pensionably employed on or after his or her 18th birthday must apply for a social insurance number within thirty days, unless a social insurance number has already been obtained. Self-employed persons, for Canada Pension Plan contribution purposes, must apply for a social insurance number unless they have earlier been assigned one. The Minister of National Health and Welfare, upon receiving an application for a social insurance number, can arrange with the CEIC to have a number assigned. Every person employing people in pensionable employment must ask them for their social insurance numbers and keep a record of them. The employee is required to supply the number within thirty days of starting work (section 100).

An application for a social insurance number must be signed in the applicant's own hand. If this is not possible, the applicant can make a mark on the application in the presence of two witnesses who must sign. After change of name, by reason of marriage or otherwise, while pensionably employed, a person is required to make an application for a card bearing the new name within sixty days of the change, unless application to another authority "empowered to receive such an application" has already been made. The same is true if a person becomes employed after the name change, or if a self-employed person making Canada Pension Plan contributions changes names (section 101).

The Minister of National Health and Welfare may enter into agreements with provincial governments providing for pension plans. In accordance with such agreements, the Minister can arrange to have social insurance numbers assigned on application to the appropriate provincial authorities by those wishing to obtain numbers. Social insurance numbers assigned as the result of agreements with the provinces are considered to have been issued under the Canada Pension Plan (section 103).

The Governor in Council may make regulations concerning: an employer's distribution of social insurance number applications and information to employees; districts in which people may apply for social insurance numbers and the establishment of convenient locations at which applications can be made; the manner in which one goes about replacing lost or destroyed social insurance number cards; and the power of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of National Revenue to assign numbers to anyone not already having one (section 104).

It is an offence to provide false and misleading information on a social insurance number application form. It is also an offence to apply for a number when one has previously been obtained. Any employer who fails to collect and record the social insurance number of employees is committing an offence and can be fined to a maximum of $100.00 (section 105).

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

The Canadian Wheat Board Act requires that every producer who does not have a social insurance number and who applies to be named in a permit book attach a social insurance number application to the permit book application. Also, every producer, other than a corporation, who already has a social insurance number shall enclose this number in an application for a permit book to be named as a producer. Through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, the Canadian Wheat Board can arrange for a card and number to be issued. A producer who changes name because of marriage or otherwise must apply to the Board within sixty days of the date when the change came into effect. A new card can be issued in the new name unless a similar application has previously been made to another authority "empowered to receive such an application" (section 41.1).

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

With respect to voting by External Affairs and National Defence employees at external voting territories, the Canada Elections Act provides that a list of Canadian Forces electors or Public Service electors be arranged alphabetically according to name and followed by the social insurance numbers and current postal addresses of the electors. In the case of each elector on the list, the surname, initials, and social insurance number will be provided, as well as the rank, if the person is in the forces, or the department, if a public servant. Additionally, the commanding officer or head of post must prepare a list of the name, social insurance number and rank or department of each designated returning officer (Schedule II, sections 39, 40).

Before delivering a ballot paper to an elector, the deputy returning officer must get the elector to complete and sign a declaration. The marked ballot will be placed into an envelope which is then placed into another envelope. On the outside of the second envelope are the elector's name, social insurance number, and unit of the Armed Forces or department of government, depending upon whether the elector is a public servant or member of the armed forces (Schedule II, section 44).

If the Minister of National Defence deems it expedient, the chief electoral officer can be supplied with the name, rank and social insurance number of every member of the Canadian Forces recorded at Headquarters as a prisoner of war (Canadian Prisoners of War Voting Rules, section 7).

INCOME TAX ACT

The provisions of the Income Tax Act relating to the use of social insurance numbers are outlined as follows.

Child care expenses may be deducted when proof of payment containing the social insurance number "of any individual payee" is provided (section 63(c)).

If the payment for child care expenses is made to someone "neither resident in Canada nor deemed by section 250 to be resident in Canada" the receipt(s) do not have to bear the social insurance number of the payee (section 63.1(c)).

With regard to receipts for expenses paid to a "medical practitioner, dentist or nurse qualified to practise under the laws of the place where the expenses were incurred or a public or licensed private hospital in respect of a birth in the family of, illness of, or operation on the taxpayer, his spouse, or any dependant", or to a full-time attendant for the taxpayer, his spouse, or dependent who was confined to a bed or a wheelchair in a nursing-home or a "self-contained domestic establishment", such receipts must contain the social insurance number of the person who issued them (section 110).

For the purposes of the Income Tax Act, "registered retirement income fund" means a retirement income fund accepted by the Minister for registration for the purposes of the Act. The fund is to be registered under the social insurance number of the first annuitant under the fund (section 146.3(e)).

Where an amount is to be paid or credited to a resident individual of Canada and not to a trust, and the ownership certificate does not contain a social insurance number, the debtor or other person paying or crediting the amount "shall deduct or withhold an amount equal to 25% thereof" and shall give that amount to the Receiver General of Canada on account of the individual's tax (subsection 234(5)).

Every individual required to file an income tax return for a taxation year after 1966 shall apply to the Minister of National Health and Welfare for the assignment of a social insurance number, unless one has already been assigned or has been applied for. If a person's social insurance number does not appear on an income tax return, he or she shall "be deemed to have failed to complete the information on a prescribed form" as required by section 150 of the Act (subsections 237(1) and (2)).

FAMILY ALLOWANCES REGULATIONS

On an application for a family allowance, the social insurance number of the applicant who intends to claim an income tax deduction in respect of a child is among the information required. Even if neither parent intends to make a deduction with respect to the child, the social insurance number of at least one of them is necessary (section 5).

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

Pursuant to the Old Age Security Act, where a social insurance number has been assigned under any other act, the minister responsible for the administration of that act and the Minister of National Health and Welfare may exchange information provided on social insurance number applications, and the numbers themselves. They may also "make or cause to be made available any such information or numbers in such manner as may be authorized by [the other] Act" (section 19(3)).

The Governor in Council may make regulations providing for social insurance number assignment by the Minister to Old Age Security beneficiaries and applicants, or to their spouses, when such numbers have not earlier been assigned (section 20(e)).

PRIVACY LEGISLATION - CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT - PART IV

Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act came into force on 1 March, 1978. The purpose of Part IV is to "protect the privacy of individuals and their right of access to records concerning them...to the greatest extent, consistent with the public interest".

The rights relate to access, correction and use of personal data. In particular, an individual has the right

(a) to ascertain what records concerning the individual inquiring are used for administrative purposes by federal government departments and institutions subject to the Act;
(b) to ascertain the uses to which such information has been put since the proclamation of Part IV;
(c) to examine such records or copies thereof, regardless of who provided the information; and
(d) to request correction of the personal information; or
(e) to require a notation on the record if the correction is not accepted.

An individual is defined as someone who is a Canadian or who has lawfully been admitted to Canada for permanent residence.

The Act also places certain limits on the non-derivative, administrative use that the federal government may make of personal information that has been provided by an individual.

Complaints about the failure to grant those rights may be dealt with by the Privacy Commissioner.

A social insurance number may be part of an individual's personal information and thus be subject to the provisions of Part IV. Indeed, approximately 150 federal information banks containing personal data record social insurance numbers of individuals.

The social insurance number is specifically required to identify the applicant who requests access to 42 of the approximately 1500 federal information banks containing personal information.

USE OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER BY FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

To analyze the extent of the use of the social insurance number in the federal context and its effect on the privacy of individuals, required contact

with each government department and agency within the federal administration. But, in view of the similarity of information from many of these sources, this section will be limited to descriptions of the use of the social insurance number as reported by selected departments.

This account begins with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, the agency responsible for issuing the social insurance number.

I. CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION

The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission was established in 1977 by the Employment and Immigration Reorganization Act which integrated the former Unemployment Insurance Commission and the Department of Manpower and Immigration. The legislation also established the Department of Employment and Immigration headed by a Minister to provide services and be responsible for the activities of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission to the Parliament of Canada.

The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission consists of four Commissioners responsible to administer unemployment insurance and immigration policies. The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council.

The same legislation created the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, consisting of a Chairman and from 15 to 20 members appointed by Order in Council, to advise the responsible Minister in all areas to which his powers, duties and functions extend.

Introduction of the Social Insurance Number:

The social insurance number was introduced in 1964 to replace the unemployment insurance number. This latter number was the national registration number used by the Unemployment Insurance Commission, then under the Department of Labour. The unemployment insurance number system was running out of numerical combinations, and a new system was required for the soon to be implemented Quebec and Canada Pension Plans. This need gave birth to the social insurance number.

The Unemployment Insurance Commission was given the responsibility for administering this new system under a central issuing agency called the Central Index. A National Systems and Services Group, now within the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, was made responsible for the development and operation of the manual and electronic data processing systems for this Index and the issuance and maintenance of social insurance numbers fell to this Group.

Over six million social insurance numbers were issued in 1964 and over the succeeding years approximately 22 million such numbers have been issued. Each year approximately 250 thousand amendments are processed because of name changes and approximately 250 thousand replacement cards are issued.

The Social Insurance Number Registry

The Social Insurance Number Registry could be referred to as the "mother lode" of the social insurance numbering system. The Registry was located in the National Capital Region until 1980 when the complete Registry and computer support system was transferred to Bathurst, New Brunswick.

Computer technology helped the functioning of the Registry. Three distinct systems exist in the Registry. One identifies persons by name or number, and retrieval of information is quite simple. This system contains a microfilm image of each approved application for a social insurance number. Information can be retrieved only by authorized staff on site, using readers equipped with an electronic counter. The second, main system is computerized. Information is on magnetic tape and consists of identification data and all names and numbers of social insurance number recipients in numerical sequence. The computer used is not online, there are no outside terminals and information can only be retrieved by authorized personnel. The third file system, called the Soundex system, allows authorized personnel to obtain the social insurance number of an individual when only a name is provided or when minor variations in the spelling or composition of a name are involved.

These three systems provide to authorized persons within the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission the capability of validating information

about the social insurance number, either by checking a name with a number or a number with a name, and verifying the correctness of information originally received.

The exchange or validation of the social insurance number is an ongoing program under subsection 126(4) of the Unemployment Insurance Act. This subsection allows the Commission the discretionary power to release "file information to such persons as the Commission thinks appropriate for the accurate identification of individuals and for the effective use by such individuals of social insurance numbers and social insurance cards." (emphasis added)

Section 114 of the Act also deals with the release of information. In referring to "confidential information", the Act states in part:

> Information, written or oral, obtained by the Commission or the Department of Employment and Immigration from any persons under this Act or any regulation thereunder shall be made available only to the employees of the Commission or the said Department in the course of their employment and such other persons as the Minister deems advisable....

The National Systems and Services Group, as a part of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, takes the position that its responsibility extends to the issuing of the number and the maintenance of the Registry. The policy for use of the number is developed elsewhere. The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission has made certain agreements with and assumed responsibilities in its relations with other federal and provincial agencies and departments. These agreements will be outlined in subsequent sections of this report.

Information Bank #4145 - Social Insurance Number Registry

The Social Insurance Number Registry is listed in the Index of Federal Information banks under

#4145 and the description given there is quoted directly from the Index for reference purposes:

4145
Social Insurance Number Registration

Point of Access:

Chief, Central Index,
355 River Road,
Tower "B", 7th Floor,
Vanier, Ontario.
K1A 0J7

This bank contains a microfilm image of each approved application for issuance of a Social Insurance Number, for issuance of a replacement Social Insurance Number Card, or for amendment of Social Insurance Register records. In excess of 22 million such microfilm records are in the bank. Information in the individual records comprises the applicant's name, sex, date and place of birth, marital status, mother's maiden name, father's given name, and status in Canada. The microfilm image also shows the applicant's address at the time he applied, and at the applicant's option, the name and address of his employer at that time; it also shows the Social Insurance Number issued or re-issued on the application. This data is retained for an indefinite period.

This information is collected for use in the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Canada Pension Plan; it is therefore accessible to the federal government officials whose responsibilities lie in those program areas. Exchange of information with National Revenue (Taxation) is also provided for both under the Canada Pension Plan

Act and under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Similarly, special Social Insurance Numbers are issued for immigration and other purposes to persons who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents pursant to the Unemployment Insurance Regulations in conjunction with the Immigration Act. Therefore, information on the Social Insurance Number Register is exchangeable with CEIC officials administering the immigration program.

Section 126(4) of the Unemployment Insurance Act provides for non-derivative use of Social Insurance Register data for the accurate identification of individuals and for the effective use by such individuals of their Social Insurance Cards and Numbers. On this basis, the Central Index will, if an authorized enquirer presents data about a SIN holder sufficient to identify that holder on the Social Insurance registers, divulge the holder's SIN to the enquirer.

This service is extended to certain federal government departments, and to organizations in other levels of govenments, where the Commission has approved such an exchange to that effect with the enquiring organization. Examples are: Department of National Defence (since the Social Insurance Number SIN is used as a service number by armed services personnel), Department of Veterans Affairs and the Superannuation Branch of Supply and Services Canada (keeping of pensioner records), the Metric Commission (to provide certainty of identification of persons paid tool conversion allowances). Under special circumstances, an employer

or former employer who has lost contact with an employee and who needs his SIN to meet legal requirements, can obtain it through the Central Index.

The RCMP may request data from the bank when it is required for the purposes of investigations under the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Canada Pension Plan Act, and the Income Tax Act. Data may also be released to the RCMP to assist the Force to identify deceased persons and to inform their next of kin, where the circumstances of death would otherwise make such identification and notification difficult. Finally, the RCMP may request the identity of the person whose Social Insurance Number SIN appears inscribed upon an item of property believed stolen, where it appears that the owner intended his SIN to be used in this way. The R.C.M.P. may also request information from the Social Insurance Registers for the purposes of accurate identification of individuals. Other police forces may request similar information, but only through the RCMP.

All requests for access by individuals must include the Social Insurance Number, name, place and date of birth of the individual, and mother's maiden name and be accompanied by the same documentary proof of identity required in submitting an original application for a Social Insurance Number. Particulars of the documentary evidence required can be obtained by contacting any local office of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission.

Social Insurance Number Card:

Social insurance number cards were originally paper, but now are embossed plastic cards approximately 8.5 x 5.5 cm. The face of the card lists the nine digit number and has provisions for the signature of the holder of the card. The only identifying feature of the number itself is the first digit which indicates the area in which the card was issued. If a number starts with the digit one, it was issued in the Atlantic Provinces; if it starts with a two, it was issued in Quebec; four, in Ontario; six, in the Prairie Provinces and seven, in the Pacific Region. This digit does not indicate where the card holder resides.

The final digit of the number is a check digit which will, through a simple mathematical formula, confirm the correctness of the complete number.

There is a vast combination of numbers and no two numbers issued are the same. Therefore, each social insurance number is unique.

The only variance of the standard nine digit number is a distinctive social insurance number issued to persons other than Canadian Citizens or permanent residents of Canada. For such persons, a special number beginning with the digit "9" is issued.

Obtaining a Social Insurance Number

Any person may apply for a social insurance number subject to certain provisions. Instructions and documentation required are fully described in pamphlets available at Canada Employment Centres. Copies of these pamphlets are attached for reference purposes as appendices B and C to this report. Further instructions are also given in the guide "How to Apply for a Social Insurance Number", published at pages 244-254 of Canadian Employment Insurance Legislation and Relevant Employment Legislation (7th Edition) 1979 (CCH Canadian Limited).

Data-Linkage:

This report has discussed the responsibility of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission to issue social insurance numbers and to validate information maintained by the Commission in its

Registry under the provisions of subsection 126(4) and section 114 of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Certain agreements have also been concluded whereby the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission communicates social insurance numbers to other governments and agencies that do not have a specific legislative requirement for the use of the number. These agreements are summarized on the following list provided by the Commission. The list indicates who receives the information, what information is given, the purpose for which it is given and the legal basis on which the transaction rests.

FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND PROVINCIAL AGENCIES PROVIDED WITH INFORMATION OR SERVICE FROM SOCIAL INSURANCE RECORDS OF CENTRAL INDEX.

DEPARTMENTS AGENCIES	PURPOSE INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT FOR	TYPE OF INFORMATION PRESENTLY GIVEN	AUTHORITY
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT			
Canada Employment & Immigration Commission	Administration of [Unemployment Insurance (UI)] Act and [Canada Pension Plan (CPP)]	District Office - SIN & Validation only Investigations - Copy of S-1	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (4)
[National Health and Welfare] - Canada Pension Plan	Administration of CPP	* Shaded area only [of Application Form]	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (4)
[National Health and Welfare] - Old Age Security	Benefit Control (Proof of Age)	SIN, Date of Birth, date record	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
National Revenue - Taxation Division	Administration of UI Act, CPP & Income Tax Act	* Shaded areas only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (4)
[Energy Mines and Resources] - General Surveys Division in cooperation with Statistics Canada	Scientific Research	Non-identifiable i.e., aggregates only, individuals are not identifiable.	CPP Act 94-& 96 UI Act (1971) Sec. 114

* SHADED AREAS [OF APPLICATION FORM] INCLUDE:

- First Given Name
- Middle Name
- Present Family Name (Surname)
- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Mother Last of Family Name at her Birth
- Status in Canada.

DEPARTMENTS AGENCIES	PURPOSE INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT FOR	TYPE OF INFORMATION PRESENTLY GIVEN	AUTHORITY
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	Police and Security investigation under UI Act	Release of all information to C.E.I.C. Benefit Control only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 121
Auditor General	Record keeping purposes	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Metric Commission	Accounting for tool conversion allowances	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4)
National Defence	Employee's personnel files	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
External Affairs	Record keeping purposes (Employee's file)	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Department of Public Works	Employee's file	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Post Office	Employee's file	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
[Statistics Canada]	Statistics research	Non-identifiable information	CPP Act 94-& 96 UI Act (1971) Sec. 114
Veterans Affairs (Includes Bureau of Pension Advocates)	Allowance Control Record keeping	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)

DEPARTMENTS AGENCIES	PURPOSE INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT FOR	TYPE OF INFORMATION PRESENTLY GIVEN	AUTHORITY
PROVINCIAL AGENCIES			
Quebec Pension Board	Administration of Quebec Pension Plan (Via CPP, for all except validation service - which is given direct)	* Shaded area only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 108 (1)
Maritime Medical Services Nova Scotia	Administration of Health Insurance Legislation	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 108 (2)
Ontario Medical Care Plan	Employee's personnel file	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 108 (2)
Prince Edward Island Medical Care Plan	Administration of Health Insurance Legislation	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Quebec Medical Care Plan (RAMQ)	Administration of Health Insurance Legislation	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Registrar of P.E.I.	Administration of Birth Registration	SIN only	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Commission des Accidents du Travail	Administration of their Act	Validation	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) CPP, Sec. 107 (1)
Coroners and Public Trustees	Administration of Provincial Acts & Custody of effects of incapable persons.	Validation	UI Act (1971) Sec. 126 (4) Provincial Legislation

There is a current co-operative venture in which the provinces, with the exception of Quebec, provide the Central Index through Statistics Canada with notice of deaths of individuals, thereby allowing the Central Index to maintain an up-to-date system of records with respect to social insurance numbers.

Canada Employment and Immigration Commission - Internal Use of the Social Insurance Number

Internally, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission has 23 Federal Information Banks listed in the Index of Federal Information Banks which contain the social insurance number as part of the information required to administer the Unemployment Insurance Program and the Employment Programs of the Commission. Information may be exchanged within the Commission where warranted.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE CANADA

The Department of Revenue Canada is divided into two components with separate responsibilities. Revenue Canada--Taxation is responsible for the administration of the Income Tax Act and Revenue Canada--Customs & Excise is responsible for the administration of the Customs Act, Customs Tariff Act, the Excise Act, the Excise Tax Act and the Anti-dumping Act.

Revenue Canada--Taxation

Revenue Canada--Taxation indicated that the social insurance number is used as a primary source of identification for all taxpayers filing Income Tax returns. A separate identifier, which is based on a numerical formula corresponding to the characters of a given name, is also used for secondary identification. This secondary identification system, according to information received from Revenue Canada--Taxation, is far less efficient, whereas the social insurance number is a unique number and provides positive identification. It is the intention of this Department to completely convert to the use of the social insurance number in its programs in the future.

Section 237 of the Income Tax Act enacted on May 13, 1965, requires that every person filing an individual Income Tax Return (T1 form) or a combined Income Tax Return (T3 form) provide his or her social insurance number. The Department refers to this section as authority for the use of the social insurance number in the administration of the Act.

Data-Linkage

Revenue Canada--Taxation also uses the social insurance number to communicate data to the Health and Welfare Canada and to the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission for purposes of administration of the Canada Pension Plan and the Unemployment Insurance Act. In this context, names, addresses and social insurance numbers are provided to these agencies for their programs. Financial information collected relative to the parts of these two Acts administered by Revenue Canada--Taxation is also transmitted. In the case of the Canada Pension Plan, information on the amount of contributions paid and pensionable earnings is provided to the Department of National Health and

Welfare. The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission receives details of the premiums paid and the insurable earnings of all persons involved in the unemployment insurance program. This information is required to calculate benefits.

The Department indicated that Health and Welfare Canada and certain provincial government departments may ask for individual tax returns in order to administer various income benefit programs which supplement Old Age Security income or student loans. In such cases the department making the request supplies to Revenue Canada--Taxation a waiver from the individual concerned that information may be released and that the social insurance number may be used as a means of access to information on Revenue Canada files.

Although it transfers its data as described, Revenue Canada--Taxation does not have computer linkage to outside agencies. It does, however, receive duplicate tapes containing all social insurance numbers and names issued by the Central Registry of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and data are updated on a regular basis.

The extent of the use of the social insurance number by the Taxation component of Revenue Canada can best be appreciated when one considers that of approximately 400 public forms, 150 provide a block for the entry of the social insurance number. In addition to public forms there are several hundred form letters issued from taxation offices to taxpayers seeking additional information in relation to the Income Tax Act, the Canada Pension Plan or the Unemployment Insurance Act and the social insurance number is the primary identifier used by the department in addressing these letters.

In addition, in support of its computer system the Department uses about 2,000 internal forms of which approximately 700 require a social insurance number for identification purposes.

Internal Use of the Social Insurance Number by Revenue Canada--Taxation

In addition to the administrative use of the social insurance number in accordance with its mandate, Revenue Canada--Taxation indicated that the social insurance number is used for: 1) identification of

personnel files of employees, and 2) a time production reporting system which outlines employees' activities on a weekly basis.

In response to this study the Minister stated:

> In my view, the use of S.I.N. by the Taxation component of my Department is essential to the administration of the Income Tax Act, the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Canada Pension Plan. Our computer systems are heavily dependent upon the use of the number as a primary identifier and the impact of any changes or restrictions in our use of S.I.N. would be very serious in terms of cost and loss of efficiency. Many millions of financial transactions affecting the records of individual taxpayers have to be processed each year. It is wholly impractical to consider doing this work without the aid of a unique identifier number. The interrelationships of U.I., C.P.P. and income tax data make it essential that the respective files of these three programs share the use of an identifier number.

Revenue Canada--Customs and Excise

This component of Revenue Canada does not utilize the social insurance number to the same extent as its sister department. The number, however, is collected and maintained in several of its data banks primarily to assist in identifying persons that the department is involved with. The use of the social insurance number by this department is not fundamental to the administration of legislation within its responsibility. The following, as listed in federal information banks, are uses of the social insurance number identified by Customs and Excise:

Information Bank #15230 - Seizure Records and Information Bank #15235 - Customs Intelligence Records

The above two banks relate to data collected for the purpose of the Customs Act and its enforcement. The social insurance number is collected where available and used as an identifying feature for individuals the Department is involved with. The Department anticipates there would be no impact if it were to cease using the number for this purpose.

Information Bank #15255 - Applications for Refund of Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline

This bank contains the applications from individuals making a request for a refund under the Excise Tax Act. The data contains each claimant's social insurance number, employer number, or excise identification number. Approximately 558,000 claimant entries use the social insurance number as identification, approximately 210,000 use employee payroll deduction numbers and approximately 10,000 (primarily partnerships) use the excise number when submitting claims for this program. Revenue Canada--Customs and Excise contends that it would cost approximately $1 million to convert to another identification system.

Information Bank #15259 - Licensee Files for Purposes of Excise Tax Act and Excise Act

The Excise Branch offices maintain a file for each licensee who files tax duty returns in a jurisdictional area under the Excise Tax Act or Excise Act. The social insurance number is used as an identifying feature. According to the Department, the impact of eliminating the use of the social insurance number and replacing it with another access identifier would entail great cost and, in addition, the social insurance number in this information bank also provides a means of verifying compliance with Royal Canadian Mounted Police requirements.

The Minister for Revenue Canada, in his closing remarks to this study, mentioned: "In those cases where my Department makes use of the social insurance number, my officials advise me that it does not represent a threat to the privacy of individuals."

HEALTH AND WELFARE CANADA

Health and Welfare Canada oversees four departmental programs that use social insurance numbers for record-keeping and record-linkage purposes. They are: the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security Program (OAS), Family Allowance Program and the National Dose Registry.

The National Dose Registry uses social insurance numbers as personal identifiers in its records of the quantities of radiation to which workers are exposed.

Section 100 of the Canada Pension Plan authorizes the use of social insurance numbers. There are some thirteen million contributors to the Plan. Having obtained records of their earnings, Revenue Canada, which collects all CPP contributions, passes the records to Health and Welfare Canada for maintenance and the administration of benefits. The social insurance number is the essential identifier used in this transfer of information.

In the late 1970's the government approved decentralization of CPP claims and benefits-processing from Ottawa to eight provincial capitals, where processing functions are to be integrated with existing Old Age Security and Family Allowance operations. The Department says that the eventual savings to be realized from the integration of these processes is significant and the use of a common identifier in all three programs is of paramount importance. Savings on data processing costs are expected from the use of computer systems and indices. Overpayments, fraudulent claims, and beneficiary hardship are prevented by using control techniques to avoid duplicate accounts. These savings and improvements are dependent on the use of a common personal identifier.

The social insurance number is now the account number for 1.3 million persons receiving Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplements, and Spouse's Allowances. Most of these individuals have special identification cards bearing the number and used to obtain benefits such as reduced rates for transportation, drugs, bank charges, admission to cinemas, and so on. Cancelling the use of the social insurance numbers, and implementing an alternative numbering system, would be, according to the

Department, costly in terms of the goodwill and peace of mind of these people. It would also be costly in terms of labour and administrative expenditures ($2 million) to change the files and advise recipients of benefits. It is estimated by this Department that another $3 million might be added to expenditures for persons who understate their income. By using the social insurance number (with the written permission of the applicant) to verify the applicant's statement of income received with Revenue Canada, it is possible to identify thousands of people each year who have improperly reported their income, and are entitled to either higher or lower benefits than claimed.

The possibility of integrating the payment of OAS and CPP benefits in one cheque each month is still being explored bythe Department. This would result in a potential saving in postage alone of $2 million annually. A common account number would be essential to achieve this end.

Health and Welfare Canada also indicated that the social insurance number is used to record benefit payments for 6.5 million children in Canada. When family allowances became taxable income, one parent was required to supply his or her social insurance number. Revenue Canada--Taxation relies on the number to ensure proper reporting of family allowance payments, and Health and Welfare Canada uses it when issuing T-4F slips.

In addition, the administration of the Child Tax Credit requires the provision of social insurance numbers for eligibility determination. Eligibility for family allowances is determined by Health and Welfare Canada and reported to Revenue Canada--Taxation using the social insurance number in Family Allowance records. National Revenue verifies the income statements of eligible applicants before issuing the credits.

Health and Welfare Canada indicated that without using the social insurance number it would be more difficult and costly to detect duplicate payments and fraud, and the use of a common account identifier for both the Child Tax Credit and the Family Allowance programs has meant considerable savings in staff years and dollars.

SECRETARY OF STATE DEPARTMENT

The Secretary of State Department reports that it uses the social insurance number in three areas:

1) Personnel and Finance Branches use the social insurance number on general administrative forms which are required by central agencies. (Such use will be detailed in the portions of this report covering the use of the number by the Public Service Commission, Treasury Board and the Department of Supply and Services.)

2) The Department uses the number on internal forms as an employee indentifier.

3) For the Canada Student Loans Program, the social insurance number is used as a main identifier on computer files. Sixteen different forms are linked in the computer, using the social insurance number for a total of 1.6 million files. There is extensive data-linkage with provincial governments, banks, other local institutions and Revenue Canada in the administration of this program.

Because of the importance of the social insurance number in the operations of the Canada Student Loan Program a detailed submission on this issue was made by the Secretary of State Department. It is quoted as follows:

A. BACKGROUND

Under the Canada Student Loans Act, full-time post-secondary students are eligible for loan assistance to a maximum of $1,800 in any one year (overall maximum $9,800). Applications, which must include financial information to justify a need for assistance, are processed by provincial authorities,

loans authorized by provincial authorities are advanced to the students by chartered banks (or other designated lenders) after confirmation of enrolment by the educational institution concerned; the federal government calculates and pays interest due on loans to the lenders and also guarantees the lenders against loss by default in repayment; if a loan is defaulted upon and paid out under the guarantee, collection agencies operating under contract which includes a provision not to disclose any particulars of a loan to third parties, effect collections of the amounts owed; where collection by agencies is not effective but the debtor is employed and financially able to make payments, the account is transferred to the Department of Justice to institute legal proceedings to recover the debt.

The number of "players" in the above process is as follows:

Provincial authorities - 9 (Quebec does not participate in the Program) and 2 territories;
Eligible educational institutions - some 1,100
Lending Institutions (branches) - 7,000
Federal administration - 1
Collection Agency Offices - 200
Department of Justice - 8 regional offices

Unique identification of each borrower is essential not only because of the number of "players" involved but to meet the following points:

- loans cannot be made to a student over a period greater than ten academic years;

- loans must be maintained at one branch of a lender to facilitate calculation and payment of interest (transfers between lenders are permitted and frequently occur);

- the maximum loan limits ($1,800 in an academic year and overall maximum of $9,800) must not be exceeded;
- any borrower can "break" his education at any time and re-enroll later;
- many transactions on accounts must be recorded (advances, defaults, repayments, etc.)

Failure to identify properly individual borrowers can result in a number of serious errors, many disadvantageous to the borrower concerned, viz:

- issue of funds to the wrong person;
- overpayment/underpayment of interest charges;
- crediting of payments to wrong accounts;
- collection/legal action being instituted against innocent persons;
- duplication of records.

Prior to 1968 (by which date some 350,000 loans had been authorized) it had become apparent that the necessary controls could no longer be achieved by using names, birth dates and other traditional identifiers. A numbering system was essential to ensure proper control. The current file of approximately 1 million records, contains for example:

37 Robert Johnsons
15 Denise Leblancs
21 Peter Chans
27 sets of triplets (many with same initials)
231 sets of twins

Very frequent changes of name for female students are processed.

Each province had also established its own student assistance program of grants/bursaries linked to the Canada Student Loans Program, and a unique identifier had become essential to ensure proper linkage of loan to grant. Accordingly, the provinces requested the Federal Government to authorize the use of the Social Insurance Number (SIN) for purposes of provincial education records including student assistance records. As these programs were a form of social assistance, it was decided that the most efficient and effective mechanism for identification was the SIN for both provincial and federal use.

The use of the SIN for these student assistance programs was approved in a letter from the then Prime Minister (Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson) to Provincial Education Ministers in early 1968 and, the mandatory use of the SIN for purposes of the Canada Student Loans legislation was incorporated in the Regulations in 1970.

B. AUTHORITY

Section 13(a) of the Canada Student Loans Act provides that the Governor-in-Council may make regulations prescribing the requirements for the various forms used in administering the program. Section 2(2) of the Regulations prescribes that, where anything in the Regulations is required to be done in a form set out in the schedules to the Regulations, all the information required on the form concerned shall be completed by the applicant. The forms require the provision of the SIN.

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR A UNIQUE IDENTIFIER

Since 1968, participating provinces and the federal government have required provision of Social Insurance Number by all applicants and the SIN has been used

as the identifier on both federal and provincial records. To date approximately 1.6 million loans have been authorized using the SIN as the unique identifier with virtually no errors made or complaints received.

Because of the number of agencies involved and the legislative restrictions, it is critical that a standard method of identification of individual accounts be used. The identifier must be unique to the student and must be known to him/her at time of application as many subsequent transactions (as well as the annual application for assistance) are initiated by the applicant and, in each case, must bear the identifier. Also, because of the interrelationship between provincial and federal programs, a common identifier must be used by both levels of government.

D. OTHER USES OF SIN BY CSLP

Information on the Canada Student Loan computer file is often cross-referenced with two other government data banks by way of the SIN for the purposes shown below:

- Provincial student assistance programs because student assistance under CSLP is issued as a 'package' by provinces with provincially funded programs.

- With Revenue Canada income tax data for purposes of verification of income data provided by applicants for the determination of their financial need. Verification is necessary to ensure the accuracy of such data and thereby to maintain the credibility of the program.

Since it is essential that these two cross references be maintained for the efficient operation of the program, any alternative to the SIN as the unique

identifier for the Canada Student Loans Program must take into consideration the ability to link Canada Student Loans Program records with those found in these other two systems.

E. CONSEQUENCE OF DISALLOWING USE OF SIN BY CSLP

Because of the incidence of error resulting from non use of a unique identifier and the resultant consequence of such error, a unique identifier system, national in scope is necessary. Such a system would make mandatory that all potential applicants first obtain an identifying number from a single source. These numbers would be issued to each applicant on a permanent card. The need for a permanent card would be to provide the student with a record of his number and to ensure the effective operation of the system. This would require each student to report accurately his correct number on any application for assistance over the life of his/her educational career. The start up costs of such a system would be in the order of $5.5 million while the annual recurring costs would amount to approximately $1.25 million. There costs are explained in the attached Appendix "A".

Also, because of expected participation of other parties, namely the banks and the provinces, it is expected that two years could elapse between the time of introduction of such a system and its full operation. Unless the provinces were also to adopt the new numbering system, two identifiers for each student receiving aid would result giving rise to the potential errors noted above.

It is, however, likely that, should a new unique numbering system be introduced, lenders, universities, provincial authorities, collection agencies and other "players" would use the new system for cross-referencing to their own records thereby introducing, to some extent, a new threat to the invasion of privacy.

APPENDIX 'A

CANADA STUDENT LOANS PROGRAM

ESTIMATED COSTS OF INTRODUCING ALTERNATIVE IDENTIFIER TO THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

1. Non-Recurring Cost

	$ million
a) Federal	
. Equipment to produce identifcation card.	.2
. Conversion of existing C.S.L. computer records (approximately 1 million records on file), issue of identity card to current borrowers on file at $2.50 per card.	2.5
. Conversion of Provincial computer or manual student assistance records to agree with new federal system at average rate of $2.75 per record for a total of some 1 million records. Records are however, on 9 different systems, in either manual or computer modes, hence per unit cost is higher than for single federal file conversion.	2.75
Sub-total federal non-recurring costs	5.45
b) Provincial	
. This cost will arise only if provinces decide to convert provincial student assistance program files to the	N/A

APPENDIX 'A'
(cont'd.)

		$ million	
1.	Non-Recurring Cost (cont'd.)		
b)	Provincial (cont'd.)		
	new identifier. It is likely that provinces will do so in order to avoid maintaining duplicate identifying systems.		
	It is not possible to estimate this cost.		
2.	Recurring Annual Costs		
a)	Federal		
	. Receiving and processing applications from potential borrowers for an identification card and issue of the card at $5.00 for each application. Some 250,000 potential borrowers consider entering post-secondary institutions each year and would, therefore, have to apply for an identification card. Maximum of $1.25 million.	1.25	
	Sub-total Federal recurring costs		1.25
b)	Provincial	NIL	
3.	Total Costs		
a)	Federal		
	Non-recurring	5.45	
	Recurring	1.25	

APPENDIX 'A'
(cont'd.)

3. Total Costs (cont'd.) — $ million

b) Provincial

Costs depend upon provincial decision with respect to identifier for provincial programs. If the federal identifier were adopted for these programs, provincial costs conversion could be substantial.

TREASURY BOARD OF CANADA

The Treasury Board of Canada is the central agency responsible for administration, organization and financial and personnel management of the federal public service.

The Treasury Board reported to this study that all or the majority of departments and agencies throughout the federal government use the social insurance number, for example, it appears in all files in the Treasury Board Secretariat Personnel Management Information System and is used in the Public Service Commission's inventories and information systems.

The Treasury Board indicated that the social insurance number is used in personnel administration for verification purposes because it has specific characteristics. The verification consists of relating a set of information to an individual entitled to a benefit, to ensure that the correct person receives the benefit. Personnel files are generally classified to protect Public Service employees from unauthorized disclosure of their information. The social insurance number is also used to link a particular set of personnel data with some other set. This is particularly true in the Central Agency Personnel Data System. As the same information is used in many locations in different contexts, attention is being given to collecting data a minimum number of times and sharing them, if it is proper to do so, by accurately linking them to other data. Although data are shared, it is the view of Treasury Board that Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act, and Regulations, directives and guidelines made with reference to the Act provide protection for an individual's data.

The view of Treasury Board as a central agency is that, should the use of the social insurance number be prohibited, administrative costs would be much higher and a new numbering system would be required. The expense of changing the vast array of forms would run to several hundreds of thousands of dollars and a decrease in efficiency of personnel administration would occur. In summary, Treasury Board submitted that the use of the social insurance number should continue for the purpose of personnel management and administration, the principal arguments in support of this approach being that there is no denial of benefits to an employee who does not supply his or her

social insurance number nor has there been any documented case in which the use of the social insurance number in personnel records in the Public Service has led to the improper sharing of information. Furthermore, where there is no legal obligation to provide the social insurance number such as on pay related forms, the number is provided on a voluntary basis.

Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act assigns special duties to a designated minister. The President of the Treasury Board has been designated by the Governor in Council to perform those special duties. The Treasury Board therefore is responsible for the control, co-ordination and up-dating of the Index of Federal Information Banks and the preparation of guidelines for the consistent implementation of the provisions of Part IV throughout the public service.

The Index of Federal Information Banks contains descriptions of federal government administrative records from over 100 federal departments and institutions. The Index describes approximately 1500 personal information banks containing records used for administrative decisions affecting individuals. It is available to the public at most local post offices and at many libraries throughout the country. In the Index of Federal Information Banks there is also a description of 17 standard employee information banks which are common to all federal government departments and agencies. The social insurance number is required for purposes of identification before access is granted to information banks.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF CANADA

The Public Service Commission was established as an independent commission by authority of the Public Service Employment Act. As such, it acts as a central agency in matters relating to employment and staffing within the federal public service. It also has authority under the Public Service Employment Act to delegate certain functions to other government departments.

The Public Service Commission has a wide responsibility to gather, use, retrieve and exchange information respecting federal employees.

The majority of the Banks of Information (BIN's) listed in the Index of Federal Information Banks with respect to the Public Service Commission relate to matters of staffing, employment or career-oriented programs for federal government employees. Although the Public Service Commission generates programs and data for its purposes, most, if not all, government departments have an input in these programs and provide most of the information regarding their own employees. Employees themselves provide much of the data on a voluntary basis.

The following is a list of the banks of information identifying the collection and use of the social insurance number in Public Service Commission programs, and a description of each program.

A. CENTRAL BANKS

APPEALS & INVESTIGATIONS

FUNCTION: Establishes independent boards to hear appeals by public servants against alleged breaches of the Public Service Employment Act and Regulations in such matters as promotion, demotion and release. Decisions of appeal boards are final and binding on the parties and on the Commission and can be set aside only by the Federal Court. Investigates complaints alleging discrimination in the Public Service from both employees and applicants for employment, plays the historic role of ombudsman and deals with complaints received from employees alleging harassment or unfair administrative treatment on the job; investigates complaints of questionable staffing activities brought to its attention by any source and other complaints concerning personnel matters generally. The registrar of the branch receives, reviews, classifies, allocates and follows up all appeals and complaints received and deals with enquiries relating to the work of the branch.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27005	Appeals Hearings Files
27025	Investigation Directorate Files

LANGUAGE TRAINING

FUNCTION: Provides basic language training to employees on the Commission's or the client's premises. Designs and conducts specialized and developmental courses for departments and agencies. Gives advice and assistance to clients in various areas of language training; development of teaching materials to meet specific needs; program evaluation; needs analysis; consultation; testing and orientation of language trainees. The branch is essentially at the service of departments and agencies which, since 1977, have had the responsibility to ensure the language training of their employees.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27175	Orientation Interview Reports
27255	Student Cumulative File
27145	Language Training Course Participant System

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27220	Request for Language Training
27080	Diagnostic Test Results and Questionnaire.

PSC SECRETARIAT

FUNCTION: Is responsible for carrying out a corporate policy planning and co-ordination role on behalf of the Commissioners. Responds to requests for information from members of Parliament. Assures the flow of current business of the Commission.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27215	Public Servants Released or Demoted.

STAFFING

FUNCTION: In accordance with the Public Service Employment Act and the Commission's policies and directives, establishes staffing policies and procedures, selection standards and administrative procedures for Commission and departmental staffing. Responsible for recruitment and referral of external candidates; performs staffing activities not delegated to departments; and oversees departmental staffing activities to ensure application of the

FUNCTION: (cont'd.)

Act and Regulations. Co-ordinates those parts of the official languages policy for which the Commission is responsible, determines linguistic standards for bilingual positions, and tests linguistic competence of candidates and incumbents. Responsibilities include the Career Assignment Program, the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women, and the Office of Native Employment, as well as human resources planning.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27015	Applicant Inventory
27020	Applicant Inventory Referral Files
27055	Competition Files
27100	Employee Positicn Abandonment File
27205	Probation Files
27210	PSC Transfer Files
27140	Language Review Committee Files
27120	Language Assessment Exemption Files
27125	Language Assessment Section Files
27135	Language Knowledge Examination (LKE) Examiner Files

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27170	Official Languages MIS
27030	Career Assignment Program (CAP) Assessment & Career Counselling Data (1968-73)
27035	Career Assignment Program Participant File (CAP)
27040	Career Assignment Program (CAP) Assessment File
27045	Career Assignment Program (CAP) and Special Development Program (SDP) Nominee Cards
27225	Selection Review Board Files
27051	PSC Examination Results
27050	Senior Management Central Employee Records
27235	Staffing Action System
27070	Data STREAM (Data System for Training Research, Employment & Appraisal of Manpower)
27155	National Capital Regional Office Referral System
27190	Post Secondary Recruitment Program Administration
27195	Post Secondary Recruitment Inventory
27065	Course Resource - Staffing Officer
27245	Staffing Officers Training Development and Certification Files

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27230	Special Officer Development Program Files
27105	Employee Security Files (non-delegated appointments)
27130	Language Coordination Centre Files
27250	Statutory and Administrative Priorities System
27240	Staffing Investigation Files

SENIOR EXECUTIVE PROGRAMS

FUNCTION: In accordance with the Public Service Employment Act and the Commission's policies, the branch establishes policies and systems for the recruitment and selection of individuals for senior executive positions in the Public Service of Canada; and performs planning, counselling and staffing for senior executives, as these are non-delegated activities. Responsibilities include the Interchange Canada and International Assignments Program, senior executive resource planning and policy and systems development.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27049	Senior Executive Central Employee Records

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27260	Senior Executive Information System
27265	Applicant Inventory for Interchange Assignments

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

FUNCTION: Provides executive, professional, managerial and supervisory training to public servants throughout Canada in response to departmental demand, by providing individualized learning activities, standard courses or training events custom-designed to suit the specific job requirements of a particular department or group of departments. Also responsible for the Northern Careers Program.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27060	Course Information System

CORPORATE SYSTEMS & SERVICES

FUNCTION: Promotes and co-ordinates departmental management systems through the operations of the following directorates administration, computer services, finance, information services, personnel and internal audit.

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
27445	COP Applicant Inventory
27450	COP Participant File

B. STANDARD BANKS

BIN NUMBER	BIN TITLE
2749-1	Employee Personnel Record
2749-2	Staffing
2749-3	Attendance and Leave
2749-4	Pay and Benefits
2749-5	Training and Development
2749-6	Official Languages
2749-8	Security Clearances
2749-11	Performance Reviews & Employee Appraisals
2749-12	Travel and Relocation
2749-13	Parking
2749-17	Identification and Building Pass Cards

C. OTHER BANKS OF INFORMATION

BIN TITLE
Supportive Dates - CAP Assessment Centre
Personnel Information System
National Revenue (CAE) Assessment Data
CAP Assessment and Career Counselling Dates (1968-73)

BIN TITLE

Appeals System

Human Resources Planning Group Profiles and Date Base

Senior Executive Test Dates File

Research Files - Test Validation Projects

Research Files - Test Development Projects

Pre-employment Medical Processes Files

The Public Service Commission indicated that the social insurance number is used in all the preceding Information Banks to ensure the correct identification of individuals, and, further, the number is the only personal identifier used as a link between the major information systems within the Public Service Commission and those of other departments. The Staffing Action Form, Data Stream Staffing Priority System and Language Knowledge Examination System use the social insurance number as the only identifier. As an illustration, when an employee is appointed to a new position anywhere in government, information concerning the appointment is conveyed to the Commission using the Staffing Action Form. If the employee belongs to the "Data Stream Category", some of the information stored in the Staffing Action Form System is automatically conveyed to the Data Stream System using the social insurance number, thus eliminating the need to obtain the information separately for Data Stream purposes. Such linkage is, according to the Public Service Commission, in keeping with the principles of section 56 of Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act and has the advantage of reducing the burden on those supplying data. In this context, while information respecting individuals is freely exchanged, there is no direct computer linkage with other departments and the information that is exchanged is required for personnel management.

The Public Service Commission made the point that the provision of the social insurance number is not mandatory when an individual is applying for a position in that portion of the Public Service for which the Public Service Commission is the sole staffing authority under the Public Service Employment Act. The social insurance number is required, however, for pay and superannuation purposes once an individual is appointed.

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES

The Department of Supply and Services is the supply and accounting arm of the federal government. As such, it acquires goods and services and maintains accounts and payroll systems for the Government of Canada and its employees. The Department is divided into separate administrations to perform its Services and Supply functions.

Department of Supply and Services--Supply

The only data bank managed by the Supply administration which requires a social insurance number is the "Industry Personnel Clearance Records", Bank #24025 in the Index of Federal Information Banks. These records cover industrial employees in the private sector as well as all Department of Supply and Services employees who require security clearance for access to classified information. The Department indicated that the social insurance number is used only as a "cross index" to verify an individual's identity against his or her date of birth and as a safety mechanism to ensure adverse information on an individual is not attributed to the wrong person. This information bank is not automated, it is separate from other personnel records and only a limited number of authorized employees have access to the data. There is no linkage of information. The Department of Supply and Services anticipates that prohibiting the use of the social insurance number for this purpose would have the effect of reducing the reliability of its records. It is noted that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Privy Council Security Secretariat and the Public Service Commission do not require the social insurance number to process individual security clearances.

Department of Supply and Services--Services

The Department stated that the collection and use of the social insurance number in its Pay Systems stems from Government legislation and regulations on the reporting of Unemployment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan and Income Tax payroll deductions or benefits of employees. Accordingly, and also because of its quality as a personal identifier, the social insurance number is used throughout the Pay Systems for a variety of identification purposes. Both the Regional Pay System and the House of Commons Pay System require the reporting and storage of the number as part of key data for entry into Pay Master Files, and authority for such use has been granted by Treasury Board. The Central Pay System and the R.C.M.P. Pay System have separate identifying numbers allotted to employees; however, the social insurance number is required for the recording of employees' salary deductions.

The social insurance number also appears on most Pay System reports, such as expenditure statements and other listings, as additional identification of the employee.

Until recently, the payee's social insurance number appeared beside the name on the face of pay cheques. When a new cheque form was introduced earlier this year, the number was transferred to the employee's personal record of earnings, which is attached to the cheque. The Department of Supply and Services is now exploring alternate ways of confirming the identity of the employee named on the face of the cheque. The Department has also requested other cheque payors to remove the social insurance numbers from cheques that are issued. The social insurance number is still carried on the Master File for reference purposes and it appears on the employee's personal record of earnings and on reports such as the Payroll and Employee Detail Register.

The Department of Supply and Services, as the pay master for a variety of other services, uses the social insurance number for making payments such as for superannuation, gasoline tax refunds, Income Tax refunds, and Canada Manpower training benefits. For these programs, the Department of Supply and Services is also investigating the possibility of eliminating the social insurance number from the face of cheques and from insert envelopes.

The Department also indicated that the purchase of Canada Savings Bonds through the payroll savings plan involves the use of the social insurance number, as both personnel and pay systems require the number on application forms. At present the social insurance number is included on the address insert used for the mailing of bonds to subscribers. Its removal from the insert in favour of an alternate personal identifier is currently being investigated.

Because of the large amount of information required for the many aspects of the pay systems administered by the Department of Supply and Services, an extensive exchange of pay related documentation flows between government departments and the Department of Supply and Services. The data are put into the Department of Supply and Services' computer but there is no linkage with computer systems in other government departments.

In a closing comment to this study the Minister of Supply and Services stated as follows:

Although administrative requirements have necessitated an increase in the applications of the Social Insurance Number since it was first introduced by Mr. Pearson, you may be assured that its use by the Department of Supply and Services is within the framework of existing legislation and is by no means indiscrimiate.

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

The Public Archives of Canada acquires and stores documentation reflecting the life and development of the nation. One of the major sources of information for such documentation is the records which the federal government itself creates. Often these records contain personal information: the archives receives, stores, and administers personnel files of former federal public servants, and former members of the Armed Forces and the R.C.M.P. Records of persons who have been incarcerated in federal penitentiaries are also maintained.

The social insurance number is now being used, whenever possible, as one of the identifiers for the millions of personal documents housed in the National Personnel Records Center maintained by the Public Archives. If the government department that collected the records arranged them by social insurance number, the records are stored at the Public Archives in the same manner.

Although the originating department may have access to information stored at the Public Archives, such access is within the limitations of legislation or for administrative or research purposes. In general, exchange of information between the Public Archives and other government departments or agencies is limited to the initial provision of the documentation or data to be stored.

In the future the Public Archives intends to convert personal services records to a computer assisted indexing and retrieval system in which the social insurance number will be the primary identifier for military personnel records, since the number is now the regimental number in the Armed Forces.

The Office of the Dominion Archivist provided this study with a comprehensive list of the various public service forms which are required for personnel programs administered by other central agencies. The use of these forms is standard throughout the Government of Canada and although the information may eventually be stored in computer at a central agency, the information is not now linked in computer systems. The list of the forms as provided by the Office of the Dominion Archivist follows:

THE USE OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER WITHIN PERSONNEL SERVICES

Staffing

1. Staffing Action Form (PSC 1306) - copies are sent to our Pay and Benefits people, the Public Service Commission (P.S.C.), Central Pay and Superannuation;

   - our Pay and Benefits people transcribe the S.I.N. onto the Pay Input form (2517) which is then input into the P.M.I.S.

   - the S.I.N. is used for identification.

2. Departmental Transfer Request (ARC 691) - the information on this is used internally and the requirement for the S.I.N. is being investigated.

3. Eligible List (PSC 6) - there is space allocated to the S.I.N. on this form, but the space is left blank.

4. Request for Language Examination Request (ARC 431) - the S.I.N. is transcribed onto P.S.C. forms and input into a computer system at the Commission.

On all the following PSC forms the S.I.N. is required for computer system input:

1. Official Language Input form number A5 (TB 360-37) social insurance number required for retrieval purposes.

2. Result of Language Knowledge Examination
(NLI 402) S.I.N. required for use by PSC
(ARC 753) Language Training Information System

3. Language Examination Request
(ARC 43) S.I.N. required for use by PSC Language Training Information System

4. Language Knowledge Examination Request and Record of Result (ARC 694) S.I.N. required for use by PSC Language Information System

Training and Development

1. Training and Development Authorization Form (ARC 690) - Information is input into the P.M.I.S. [Personnel Management Information System] and is used for identification purposes.

Planning and Evaluation

1. Performance Review and Appraisal Reports - The S.I.N. will be input into P.M.I.S. and used for identification purposes.

Staff Relations

1. Exclusion Submission to Treasury Board (DSS forms) - The form is sent to Personnel Application Centre and input into their computer system for identification purposes.

Staff Relations (cont'd.)

2. General Physical Examination Report (NHW 365) - Form is sent to National Health and Welfare and we have no idea as to why the S.I.N. is required.

Pay and Benefits

All of the following forms are sent to Supply and Services Canada. We assume that the S.I.N. is used as an identifying element in their computer system.

1. Requisition for Death Benefit Payment (DSS 2007)

2. Determination of Payee (DSS 2008)

3. Requisition for Return of Contributions (DSS 2009)

4. Optional Benefit Form (DSS 2011)

5. Election to Continue as Participant (Death Benefit) (DSS 2017)

6. Application for Long Term Disability (DSS 2027)

7. Application for Public Service Management Insurance Plan and Claim Forms (DSS 2028)

8. Change of Name of Beneficiary (DSS 1546)

9. Statement of Health (CT 912)

10. Non-Elective Service Record (DSS 2000)

11. Elective Pensionable Service (DSS 2001)

12. Election Form for Elective Service (DSS 2006)

Pay and Benefits (cont'd.)

13. Notice of 35 Years Pensionable Service (DSS 2019)

14. Deduction from Annuity or Annual Allowance

15. Superannuation Medical Examination (DSS 2012)

16. Designation of Beneficiary for Death Benefit (DSS 2196)

17. Information - Canada Pension Plan (DSS 2224)

18. Screening Form (DSS 2013)

19. Bond Change and Bond of Indemnity (CSB 1)

20. Disability Insurance Application Form

21. Disability Insurance Claim Forms (DSS 2044 (Eng) DSS 2044 (Fre))

22. Income Tax Exemptions (TD 1)

23. Additional Income Tax Form (TD 3)

24. Payroll Deductions (PSAC Form 26)

25. G.S.M.I.P. [Group Surgical Medical Insurance Plan] Application (CT 102)

26. Application for Remuneration Supplement

27. Income Tax Waiver (TD 2)

28. Personnel Pay Input and Time Summary Form (DSS 2549)

29. Record of Employment

The following forms are sent to the Department of Labour and the Workmen's Compensation Board. We are unsure of the purpose for collecting the S.I.N.

1. Employer's Report of Accident

2. Employer's Subsequent Statement

3. Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report

4. Quebec Compensation Notice of Accident

5. Quebec Compensation - Employer's Final Report

Information from the following forms is input into the department P.M.I.S. and the S.I.N. is used for identification purposes:

1. Application for Leave

2. Monthly Report (Leave)

3. Personnel Pay Input Form (DSS 2517) - This form is also sent to D.S.S.

The following form is sent to the "Receiving Department" and is used for identification purposes:

1. Report of Previous Service

The Official Languages and Personnel Data Section require the use of the social insurance number to answer Treasury Board requirement on the Official Language Input System. Treasury Board Secretariat Official Languages Branch uses the O.L.I.S. to report to Parliament.

The Official Languages and Personnel Data Section also requires the use of the S.I.N. for all of the forms which are being input into the Departmental Personnel Management Information System (P.M.I.S.); because it [the number] is the required element that links all incumbent information into a single data base.

The S.I.N. is the only unvariable element which is reported on all forms while other identifier such as name, initial, position number, etc. may change or be abbreviated.

Forms used by Official Languages and Personnel Data

1. Language Training Recommendations and Training Plan (PSC 1772)

2. Request for guidance services language training (PSC 1743)

3. Notification of enrollment on language training (PSC 1175)

4. Request for language training (PSC 1725)

5. Withdrawal report (PSC 1662)

STATISTICS CANADA

Statistics Canada indicated that, long before the provisions in the Canadian Human Rights Act required controls on the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information held in Federal Information Banks, there were controls set by the Department relating to the uses of personal information. In general, Statistics Canada uses the social insurance number to facilitate access to existing administrative records originating from federal and provincial agencies. The number is provided as part of the information furnished by these organizations and, where access to such administrative records is not required, the Department does not use the number as its primary personal identifier. In fact, the social insurance number is accepted, as are other identifiers such as name, address, and Health Insurance numbers, to facilitate the production of statistics.

The uses of the social insurance number reported by this Department fall into three categories:

(1) to facilitate the identification of unincorporated businesses and access to federal taxation records,

thereby permitting the substitution of taxation data for survey returns in the business sector and reducing the reporting burden on the businesses concerned. For this purpose individuals are asked only once to provide their social insurance number voluntarily to the department;

(2) to facilitate access to existing provincial administrative records in the areas of health and education statistics, thereby eliminating the need for direct data collection from the individuals concerned;

(3) in the area of health statistics, to assist in research projects concerned with the identification of individual characteristics according to residence. The use of the number facilitates linkage of information over successive reporting cycles in studies involving such matters as geographic mobility and delayed health effects.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

The submission received from the Department of National Defence (DND), was detailed and strongly argued. Selected portions of the submission are summarized in this section.

In the Department, a unique numerical identifier for both military and civilian personnel is considered necessary, to provide an economical and accurate means for the exchange of information with other government departments. This information relates to salary deductions required by law under the Unemployment Insurance Act, Income Tax Act, Canada Pension Plan, and provincial health schemes, for the 155,000 members of the Department.

The social insurance number is also used as a personal identifier in the Personnel Management Records

and Information System. This System includes all administrative aspects of recruitment, training, career management, preparation for retirement, and release.

In addition, the number provides quick and accurate identification of large numbers of personnel during national and international emergencies, mobilization and build-up to conflict, and during hostilities. A unique identifier is also critical to proper and timely identification of wounded, killed, and missing personnel.

The Unemployment Insurance Act requires under section 72 that records shall be kept "including the Social Insurance Number of each insured person". In order to preclude the cost of maintaining two separate numbers, DND decided to use the social insurance number as the service identification number for military purposes.

Social Insurance Number Use in the Military Information System

The Military component of DND presently maintains a Personnel Management Information System for approximately 121,000 personnel, of which approximately 80,000 are Regular Force, and 41,000 are Primary and Supplementary Reserve Force. The system is maintained to facilitate fulfillment of administrative support functions associated with personnel management. The system consists of paper records containing documents (the majority of which are normally held at the Unit where the individual is employed); microfiche film records, (normally held at National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ)); and computer records (normally stored in one of the several automated systems presently in use).

As can be seen from the brief description, the system is extremely large. It also consists of a multitude of records and documents. Each person in the Regular Force has a minimum of seven separate manual paper records, each in a different physical location. The first six, consisting of the Personal, Pay, Medical, Dental, Supply and Unit records are as a rule held in the geographical location where the individual is employed; the seventh record is maintained by the Career Manager at National Defence Headquarters. In the Regular Force of 80,000 personnel there are at least 560,000 manual records that each contain a social

insurance number used for unique identification. Each of the 22,000 member Primary Reserve has three separate records for a total of 66,000 records. Each of the 15,000 Supplementary Reserves has only one record for a total of 15,000 records. Each of the 4,000 Cadet Instructors has two records for a total of 8,000 records. When this total of 89,000 is added to the 560,000 Regular Force records, the number increases to 649,000 records for which the social insurance number is the key identifier. Each record contains a considerable but unknown number of documents that utilize the social insurance number as the unique personal identifier. Thus, there are literally thousands of records and millions of documents in the DND military manual records system that contain the number. The social insurance number is used for quick and accurate selection and identification in such cases as, for example, when it is necessary to find the right individual with the surname Smith among the five hundred and seventy odd Smiths in the military at this time.

In addition to the paper record system, Regular Force Career Managers and other NDHQ administrators maintain a record of certain documents and events on microfiche (microfilm). This system has the advantage of compressing in a relatively small reading area large quantities of information in a readily accessible manner. The filing key used for this system is the social insurance number. The DND presently has 500,000 microfiche records that contain an estimated average of 3 jackets per record. There are approximately 1.5 million microfiche jackets that have the number as the unique identifier in the microfiche part of the manual records system. These microfiche records are filed by social insurance number rather than by name, allowing the selector to go directly to the correct file.

The DND operates twenty-three separate data processing systems that use the social insurance number as a unique personal identifier. The systems are used in performing the following administrative functions for approximately 121,000 military personnel:

a. payment of Regular and Reserve Force personnel;

b. provision of pay information to Revenue Canada for Regular Force personnel and some components of the Reserve Force;

c. contributions to Canada Pension, provincial hospitalization plans, etc.,

d. deductions from salary for insurance plans, registered retirement savings plans, and other financial institutions as requested by the individual;

e. provision of information to personnel on pay deductions;

f. provision of data reports or other information to assist personnel managers in personnel management functions;

g. collection and processing of personnel information for use in applied research and provision of information to other government departments, such as Statistics Canada or the Chief Electoral Officer;

h. provision of automated printouts to individuals for verification of information; and

i. provision of data reports on such matters as manning levels and establishments of forces.

In summary, in the Military Personnel Information System, the social insurance number is the key identifier for all personnel records in the manual system; it is the filing key and ultimate key in the microfiche system; and the prime key for the input, updating and sorting of data in the automated Personnel Management Information System.

In addition to the military personnel information systems the DND maintains a Civilian Personnel Information System (CPIS) on all DND civilian employees (34,000). The civilian requirement is somewhat different and the system is considerably less comprehensive. It consists of manual records, microfiche records with limited content and an automated personnel information system.

DND maintains two separate manual paper records on civilian employees. One record is held at the unit where the individual is employed; the other is held at the NDHQ for career managers. These 68,000 records are all filed by name but include the social insurance number as the key identifier in instances where several files contain the same surname. For its civilian employees DND also maintains microfiche records that contains a limited amount of information. This system has three separate filing keys: information can be retrieved based on social insurance number, name, or position number.

The Civilian Personnel Management Information System (CPMIS) uses the social insurance number for updating of information that is used to:

a. provide information for Unit and Regional Civilian Personnel Officers for staffing audit purposes;

b. provide information for input to the Treasury Board Official Language Information System;

c. provide information to the Treasury Board Pay System for compulsory pay deductions;

d. control the official position list and prepare statistical returns to Treasury Board;

e. calculate the budget on civilian salaries and departmental estimates;

f. monitor manpower usage and salary expenditures during each fiscal year;

g. forecast changes in the establishment;

h. process changes in the establishment;

j. verify and control established person years; and

k. provide information for the monthly production of the Resource Management Report.

The statistical information provided by the automated CPMIS is considered vital to DND civilian personnel management. This automated system uses the social insurance number for data collection, processing and output, and linkage to other authorized government departments.

In summary, the use of the social insurance number as a personal identifier is at present pervasive within DND. It is used in making salary deductions, in maintaining the personnel management information system, in compiling information to assist in the making of management decisions, in providing feedback of pay and personnel information, in making personal pay deduction services; and in identifying missing and killed personnel. Thus, if the use of the number were denied for other than compulsory pay deductions it would, as explained hereunder, have a substantial impact on the Department.

Implications to the Department of National Defence if the Social Insurance Number were Restricted to Compulsory Pay Deductions

In assessing the implications of restriction of the use of the social insurance number, the Department made the following assumptions which are quoted from its submission:

a. Government regulations would not be changed; therefore, S.I.N. would be retained in the pay system to facilitate data linkage with Revenue Canada and other authorized government departments that receive pay information. A second unique identification number would be devised to meet other departmental administrative identification requirements.

b. S.I.N. would be retained on documents presently in the system as the cost to change the millions of documents would be prohibitive, i.e., record jackets only would be changed.

c. The use of S.I.N. for Canadian Forces Military Personnel would be replaced by a unique service identification number as was the case prior to adoption of the S.I.N. in 1968. To minimize disruptions and costs, and to distinguish between the S.I.N. and the service number, the latter would consist of two alphabetical characters plus seven numerical digits.

d. A unique civilian employee number would be designed with a nine character alphabetical and numerical code to facilitate data linkage with authorized government departments. (Presumably the number would be a Public Service Commission number and be compatible with any Treasury Board system).

e. Implementation would be accomplished within a given time frame. A one year maximum time period has been assumed for the purpose of cost calculations.

The implications of the restriction of the use of the social insurance number to compulsory pay deductions, and the corresponding requirement to adopt an additional unique identifier for the military and civilian personnel was discussed in the Department's submission under the headings of financial and administrative impact.

Denial of the use of the number other than for compulsory pay deductions would have the following administrative impact on the Department:

a. it would be necessary to create a cell within the military component of DND to administer the assignment of service numbers to personnel;

b. it would probably be necessary for the Public Service Commission to develop a unique identifier for DND civilian employees;

c. the use of two numbers, ie Service number and S.I.N. would create confusion, delay and administrative errors because of the requirement to remember and correctly apply both numbers;

d. changing S.I.N. to service number in the 673,000 military manual records and to public service numbers in the 68,000 civilian manual records would be a very substantial administrative task for the civilian and military personnel in charge of records;

e. a similar undertaking would be required to convert from the S.I.N. to the new numbering system on the 1,500,000 jackets for the 500,000 microfiche records;

f. it would also be necessary to develop and implement an extensive project throughout DND to re-issue identification cards to civilian and military personnel and identity discs to the latter;

g. it is doubtful if the conversion from social insursance number to service number could be accomplished without serious disruption to present automatic data processing (ADP) programs;

The department stated that its analysis of financial implications of the limitation of the use of the social insurance number is based on estimates provided by systems users and is largely subjective. Also, the period to implement the change from using a social insurance number to using a service number was assumed to be one year; if in fact three or four years were allowed, the estimates would differ. However, the estimates provided are considered a reasonably realistic indication of the anticipated costs. A summary of the Department's analysis of these costs follows.

If a nine digit service number were to be issued to each service member it would be necessary to set up a special unit to assist in the design, development, implementation and control of the revision process. This could probably be accomplished by a staff of two military and one civilian employees. The one time cost for staff and material is estimated at $100,000. The ongoing cost to continually assign service numbers after the initial issue is estimated at $25,000 annually.

It would be necessary to change the social insurance numbers to service number on close to 750,000 records. It is considered that for the most part this would be done mainly by existing staff. However, some additional time, including overtime, would be devoted to the task. The cost has been estimated at $54,000.

In addition it would be necessary to re-label over a half-million microfiche records. These records have an average of three plastic jackets on which social insurance numbers would have to be changed to service numbers. The cost to change the 1,500,000 jackets has been estimated at $386,782.

The requirement to provide compulsory pay deduction information to other government departments would necessitate retaining the social insurance number and a unique service number in the military pay system. In addition to the one time conversion cost of $133,000, there would be an estimated ongoing cost of $23,000 for additional computer time to process compulsory pay deduction information based on the social insurance number for other government departments, and to process pay information based on the service number for DND. The estimated cost to convert the Automatic Data Processing systems comes to a total of $454,425.

Another cost that would be incurred would be for re-issuing identity cards to both civilian and military personnel and identification discs to military personnel. The identification card expires every five years. Issuance is keyed on birthdate to facilitate even distribution of replacement workload. If use of the social insurance number were denied for this purpose and a unique service number were introduced it would be necessary to complete in one year the workload that is normally completed in five. Additionally, it would be necessary to issue all military personnel with new identification discs. The cost of this program has been estimated at $1,000,000.

The following is a summary of total estimated costs if use of the social insurance number were limited and a separate service number employed:

a.	Administrative Implementation Staff	$100,000.
b.	Conversion of Manual Systems	$ 54,000.
c.	Microfiche System	$386,782.
d.	Automatic Data Processing System	$454,425.
e.	Other	$1,000,000.
	Total one time cost	$1,995,207.
	Total increased yearly ongoing cost	$48,000.

The Department concluded as follows:

> The Social Insurance Number must be retained, in accordance with the UIC, Income Tax and Pension Acts, to make compulsory pay deductions. Use of SIN as a single unique identifier is also the most economical and sure method of providing information for management decisions and making certain that recorded information is stored and updated correctly on the right person and that casualties and missing persons are properly identified. The use of SIN as a single unique identifier in place of a duplicate system that would be necessary if its use were denied, has several advantages - the most salient one being economy. This advantage is particularly important at a time when managers at all levels are under constant pressure to reduce costs and resources utilized for administration. SIN is utilized throughout the DND manual, automated records and information systems. If the use of SIN, other than for compulsory pay deductions, were denied the cost to DND to change to a duplicate numerical system would be a one time cost of

approximately two million dollars. There would also be an appreciable increase in ongoing operating costs to administer and operate the duplicate system. A lesser but additional factor is the considerable reprogramming that would be necessary to revise the old system and implement the new. The analysis, design and extra programming required would adversely impact on the present system and would disrupt the planning of future systems. Finally, the change to a duplicate system would have an adverse effect on service personnel who would be required to remember yet another number, when a single identifier would seem to satisfy so many requirements.

There is a recognized danger to the privacy of information if SIN is utilized as a single unique identifier, in that it could become easier to obtain information if adequate control and security measures were not in place. This is a concern for everyone but it is considered that denying the use of SIN for other than compulsory pay deductions will do little to address this problem. It is possible that regulative control measures other than denial of the use of SIN could be devised to address the problem of information privacy. Within DND strict controls are in place which regulate the flow of personal (private) information. Information on DND employees is not indiscriminately passed on to third parties.

SIN is nationally unique and facilitates effective and efficient administration of present social programs. Utilization of SIN as a single unique identifier within DND is the most cost effective and efficient method of providing the personnel information necessary for the department to manage, both in peace and in war time, and to provide information to other authorized government

departments. When the financial and administrative advantages of utilizing SIN as a single unique identifier in DND are compared to the limited protection to personal information that would questionably be afforded if present use were denied, it is concluded that the use of SIN should not be denied to those government departments who have demonstrated a legitimate requirement for its use.

Since there must be a single unique identifier for each member of the CF and based on economical and administrative reasons, it is recommended that the Canadian Forces be permitted to continue the use of SIN.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

The R.C.M.P. uses social insurance numbers for personnel purposes. The number is used in the processing of compensation and benefits for Public Service employees and as it is the main employee identifier within the Department of Supply and Services pay system, information to be incorporated into that system must bear the social insurance number. Most of the forms used in the processing of employee benefits require the reporting of the social insurance number. Plans such as the Disability Insurance Plan and Workers' Compensation Plan use the social insurance number as the main reference number. Documents submitted to Treasury Board concerning attendance, leave, overtime, and shift work require the number and it is also requested by Treasury Board for a computerized inventory of all persons in managerial or confidential positions.

The R.C.M.P. advises that social insurance numbers are not specifically required for its policing activities; however, the number may be used in certain investigations.

The numbers appear on some fingerprint records submitted to the R.C.M.P. for identification, although there is no space provided for the number on the fingerprint forms.

The social insurance number is used as an additional means of identification when a wanted or missing person, whose fingerprints are on file, is entered in the Federal Bureau of Investigation computer system in the United States.

The Security Fraud Information Centre is the central repository for all provincial securities commissions acting under provincial laws. The provincial commissions require applicants to submit social insurance numbers. The Centre does not itself request social insurance numbers but accepts them when they are provided by member commissions.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Department of External Affairs is responsible for representing and protecting Canadian interests in dealing with other countries and international organizations. It also provides passports and Certificates of Identity to Canadian citizens and other permanent residents of Canada.

The Department of External Affairs mentioned that Canadians travelling abroad who require financial assistance are required to complete a form, "Application for Financial Assistance", which contains a space for the applicant to give his or her social insurance number. However, on no occasion is an application refused on the basis that the number is not provided.

In the past a space was allotted on the passport application form for the social insurance number but the issuance of a passport was not conditional upon the provision of the number. New application forms no longer contain a space for the social insurance number.

The Department indicated that the social insurance number is used internally in the normal pay and staff related areas. Here it is used to distinguish between persons with the same name. This aspect led to the use of the social insurance number as the principal identifier in the department's computerized Personnel Management Information System (PMIS), which is now in the final stages of development. (This system has been referred to in earlier portions of this report.)

It is worthwhile to refer to the views of the Department of External Affairs as to the use of the social insurance number in its own PMIS. Part of its PMIS involves the administration of pay to staff on world-wide rotational service. Therefore, in the view of this Department, it is logical to incorporate the use of the social insurance number in this system:

> The Personnel Management Information System uses the social insurance number as a means of uniquely identifying employees on its computer system. This system contains information such as annual salary, language skills, location of employees, date arrived at post, dependents at post. The system is designed to utilize data from government-wide documents such as the pay input form, and from departmental documents such as the posting confirmation form. These forms all use the social insurance number as the primary means of identification of employees.
>
> The Personnel Management Information System contains a variety of information on individuals related only to personnel management. It is a unique system used only for internal personnel management purposes. It is not linked to other government departments or other data bases within the Department but the social insurance number does perform a data linkage function within the system. Access to the information stored in the system is controlled.
>
> The collection and use of the social insurance number within the Department does not in our view appear to represent a threat to the privacy of the individual. The social insurance number is used as a means of identification only; the individual is informed of the information stored on the computer and is asked to verify its accuracy; the information is used internally for personnel management purposes only; access to the information is controlled; and the information is not linked to any other systems.
>
> The Personnel Management Information System is computer based and therefore must have a

method for the unique identification of individuals. All departments presumably have this need, including the Central Pay Office. The social insurance number meets this need. If the use of the social insurance number were withdrawn or prohibited, our Personnel Management Information System would have to be partially redesigned and re-programmed. An internal employee numbering system would have to be introduced to provide a unique method of identifying individuals. Implementing such a system would require considerable effort and would be expensive. In the end the unique employee number would provide no more privacy within the Department than the social insurance number.

THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

The Canadian Wheat Board is an independent agency established by the Canadian Wheat Board Act to insure the stable production and marketing of Canadian grain products.

Section 41.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act requires each producer to provide a social insurance number upon application for a permit book.

This section of the Canadian Wheat Board Act was added at the time the Western Grain Stabilization Administration was created by the Government of Canada to regulate the production of wheat. To ensure individual producers do not produce more than their quotas, an identification system was required and the social insurance number was adopted for this purpose.

OTHER FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

In addition to the legislative requirements under the Unemployment Insurance Act, Canada Pension Plan and Income Tax Act, which all federal departments and agencies must comply with as employers, the collection and use of the social insurance number by other government departments and agencies are related to a wide range of activities.

Many departments ask for the social insurance number in security screening programs to assist in identification. The actual security screening agencies do not require the number to process security

clearances but in most cases it was indicated that the request was adopted to provide for communications with the Department of National Defence in order to confirm previous clearances. Identification cards and building passes issued by some departments also include the social insurance number of the holder.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans stated it requests the social insurance number on application forms for vessel registration, vessel subsidies, fisherman's licenses, and as a data entry feature used in fish plants to coordinate payments to fishermen by the Saltfish Corporation. The Department of Transportation uses the social insurance number as an identifying feature on records of Certificates for Masters, Mates, and Seamen, on Certificates as to Competency as a Marine Engineer, on Canadian Coast Guard Watch Keeper Certificates, and on Canadian Coast Guard Command Certificates. Another licensing agency, the Department of Communications, previously included the social insurance number on Radio Examination Certificates but has discontinued this practice.

The social insurance number is also recorded on bankruptcy case files processed by the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Department will, however, process bankruptcy claims if no number is provided.

The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce makes payments to individuals under the Workers Metric Tool Program using the social insurance number. Under this program, the Federal Government subsidizes the cost of metric tools purchased by workers who must supply their own tools as a condition of employment. The social insurance numbers of both the employee and the employer are requested to establish the bona fides of each and to avoid duplication of payment. The information is validated using the Social Insurance Number Central Index maintained by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce also indicated that it collected the social insurance number as part of a 1977-78 Labour Force Tracking Survey to assess the impact of industrial plant closure on employees who were laid off. In this statistical survey the social insurance number was provided by the employer and was used to identify the employees.

Another interesting use of the social insurance number was reported by the Department of the Environment. This Department requests the social insurance number of applicants for participation in the Goose Hunt at Cap Tourmente, Quebec. The number is used as an identifier to ensure that only qualified Canadian citizens obtain the necessary hunting permit and that an individual's name is recorded only once in the lottery established by the Department to determine the number of persons who may hunt in a given year.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, the Pension Advocates Board and the Pension Review Board do not use the social insurance number as a file number to process a veteran's claim to entitlements unless the regimental number of the individual happens to be the social insurance number. (This is now the case with all Department of National Defense military personnel.) In its efforts to assist veterans, the Department has requested the social insurance number on occasion to help veterans obtain medical or hospital services, for which the number may be required. The Department has used the number to assist in the settlement of estates where identification was in doubt. The number may also be used if a salary assignment is made by a veteran to the Director of the Veteran's Land Accounts. Such action is taken under the Veterans Land Act to obtain financial assistance on entry into a mortgage contract.

The social insurance number is collected by the Solicitor General's Department from all offenders admitted to federal institutions to insure inmates' eligibility for social benefits, employment and pay, both during and subsequent to incarceration. This Department indicated that some offenders have no social insurance number and when incarcerated are encouraged to acquire one, while others have been found to have several. In the latter case the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission is notified. The social insurance number is not used as a data-linkage device and is not used by the Parole Service.

The following are other areas where use of the social insurance number was reported:

- The number is used in making deficiency payments to agricultural producers by the Department of Agriculture. (Such deficiency payments are made according to the principles established under the Canadian Wheat Board Act.)

- Provision of the number is a condition of passage for all government employees, civilian or military, who use the Department of National Defence's Air Transports.

- The number is used as an identification number for scholarship applications made to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

- The number is used as an account number provided to group carriers for employee pension and medical plans.

- The number has been used as a tracing device to locate individuals who may owe money to the Crown.

- The number appears on cheques paid to individuals under the Canadian Home Insulation Plan administered by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

- The social insurance number is also used as an identifying account number in payroll deduction forms used by the government to assist the Public Service Alliance's collection of union dues.

- A provision is made on Access Request Forms for the individual to provide his or her social insurance number to obtain access to information in certain Federal Information Banks listed in the Federal Index of Information Banks.

2.3 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY - AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS NOT SUBJECT TO PART IV OF THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

INTRODUCTION

As indicated previously, the original terms of reference required this study to examine the use of the social insurance number by:

1) institutions in the public sector that do not fall within the provisions of Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act,
2) institutions in the private sector that come within the legislative authority of Parliament,

and they were later expanded to include the use of the number within the whole federal public sector. Agencies and institutions not subject to Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act were therefore studied first. The methodology was the same throughout. Many crown corporations and organizations in the public sector and representative organizations in the private sector were approached and their views were sought.

Findings on the use of the social insurance number in these areas were similar to those relating to use in government departments subject to the provisions of Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

The prevalent response from the parties that submitted representations was that the social insurance number was collected and used in employer-employee relations to report to the federal agencies dealing with unemployment insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, and the Income Tax Act. The requirement to use the number in providing pay related data of employees to the Department of Supply and Services Central Pay System was also mentioned by some crown corporations.

Responses were also received from some organizations concerning the practicality of using the social insurance number as an internal employee identification number. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mentioned that the organization did not originally use the social insurance number as an employee identification number, but with the need to collect and use the number on reports to other federal

agencies, it became practical and less costly to use the social insurance number as the employee number. On the other hand, VIA Rail Canada informed this study that to maintain good employee-management relations, the company converted its internal system from using the social insurance number as the employee number to using a distinctive identification number for all VIA Rail employees. This conversion, to be completed in early 1981, was at the request of the employees and will cost approximately one half million dollars and affect approximately 4000 employees.

Atomic Energy of Canada, a crown corporation, also used the social insurance number in long term studies into the health hazards of exposure to ionizing radiation. To quote from the submission received from Atomic Energy of Canada, "The study involves linking our radiation dose records with personnel identification records, and social insurance numbers are the key to bringing these two sets of records together...Reports issued as a result of the study will be of a statistical nature only." (The use of the social insurance number in health related studies is discussed earlier in this report.)

The Bank of Canada, in its role as Registrar of the public debt, utilizes debt instruments such as Treasury Bills, Marketable Bonds, and Canada Savings Bonds. The social insurance number is not used with respect to the first two. The Bank advised that Revenue Canada requires individuals cashing any type of bearer coupon to supply their social insurance numbers or be subject to a 25% withholding of the proceeds against taxes. Canada Savings Bonds fall into this bearer coupon category, but there is no Bank of Canada requirement for social insurance numbers upon redemption of these securities.

The Bank of Canada pointed out that in the 1979-80 Canada Savings Bond campaign, 95 per cent. of purchasers provided their social insurance numbers on application forms. Within the Bank's administrative system, each bondholder is identified by a 10 digit account number made up of the holder's social insurance number with a '0' prefix. The Bank has found this number to be invaluable in identifying a client's holdings and ensuring that information concerning these holdings is passed on to the right customer. When a person declines to provide a social insurance number, "the computerized system automatically establishes a

new account and number for these purchase records." Use of a unique number, when approximately two million individuals purchase bonds each year, leads to "efficient use of computer time and information storage." Considerable savings result for the Bank and, consequently, for the general public.

As an addendum to the Bank of Canada report, it is noted that the Minister for Revenue Canada announced on 30 September, 1980, that people who do not provide a social insurance number will no longer have to pay a 25 per cent. withholding tax on their interest payments when cashing Canada Savings Bond interest coupons. The requirement for a 25 per cent withholding tax was introduced in 1977. Removal of this requirement was first proposed in the budget of 11 December, 1979 and was also included in the Ways and Means Motion of 21 April, 1980. The Minister said his Department will remove the withholding tax requirement immediately to avoid inconvenience for bond holders who normally cash their bond interest coupons in November.

2.4 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The need to collect, use, and exchange information in the federal jurisdiction has an impact on most, if not all, persons in Canadian society.

The administrators of social programs require the means to properly identify individuals. As a consequence, since its inception in 1964, the nine digit social insurance number has become a key identifying tool in data processing.

Earlier sections have chronicled the many areas where the social insurance number is requested and used and where information is exchanged using this number as an identifier. It is apparent from the submissions received that the greatest use made of the social insurance number falls within those areas where there is a legal requirement to provide the number, such as under the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Canadian Pension Plan and the Income Tax Act. Others have adopted the number to assist in the identification of clients or individuals involved in their programs.

As one of the largest employers in the country, the federal government uses the number extensively to aid in identifying employees in the many areas associated with employer-employee relations. These too have been chronicled in this report.

The many programs engendered by the federal government require that voluminous amounts of information be exchanged. The social insurance number in many instances is the identifying link or key in this exchange. It is also used to link different sets of personal information. This linkage gives rise to the fear that improper use of the social insurance number may endanger personal privacy. This is particularly true when one considers the capability of the computer to store, process, and retrieve large amounts of data with minimum effort and time.

According to the submissions made to this study, however, discontinuing the use of the number for administrative purposes would not ensure privacy of information provided by individuals to the federal system. The protection of personal information requires that proper safeguards be established and that all persons who have access to personal information

appreciate the need to use that information in the proper manner and for the proper purposes.

This study was also asked to look into the implications that would follow if the use of the social insurance number were restricted by legislation. It was difficult to arrive at precise findings on this matter. Certain departments of government provided specific cost details such as those from by the Department of National Defence and the Department of the Secretary of State. Others, although not specifically addressing this question, offered views that the cost in money and staff would be considerable and would be an expense that would eventually be borne by the taxpayers of the country. Several responses mentioned that if the social insurance number were restricted to certain programs, a similar identifier would take the place of the social insurance number, thereby accomplishing nothing in the changeover but inconvenience to those required to convert existing systems.

2.5 PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Provincial and territorial administrators reported that there are advantages in using the social insurance number to assist in administering programs that fall within their areas.

All provincial governments have to respond to the statutory requirements of reporting information to the federal government under the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Canada Pension Plan and the Income Tax Act. It was also indicated that in certain federal-provincial cost sharing programs, such as for the administration of student loans and supplements to old age security, certain information is shared which necessitates the exchange of the social insurance number. Therefore, provincial governments adopted the number for their purposes.

Many provincial and territorial officials were consulted in order to find out for what purposes the social insurance number is used. Some officials invited members of the Social Insurance Number Study to visit, while others submitted written responses directly to the Privacy Commissioner's office. While all expressed interest and willingness to participate in the study, not all were able to complete surveys and respond in sufficient time for their submissions to be included in this report.

NEWFOUNDLAND

The use of the social insurance number in the province of Newfoundland is not extensive. This province has its own medicare plan employing separate account numbers. However, the social insurance number is requested as a secondary identifier from patients upon admission to and departure from provincial cottage hospitals. This request is made to avoid duplicate support payments to these hospitals by the Provincial Health Department. The social insurance number is also used as an account number for all Provincial Government employees who are eligible for supplementary hospital insurance coverage. It is used to facilitate the processing of claims with the group carrier.

The Department of Social Services also uses the social insurance number as a secondary identifier of individuals eligible for social benefits. It was

indicated that it is required to ensure that the necessary services are in fact provided to the correct person. According to officials of this Department, social benefits on occasion were previously provided to the wrong person because of incorrect identification. (It was explained that this occurred because many individuals with similar names reside in the same areas of the province.)

The social insurance number is used as an employee number for all provincial employees in matters relating to staffing and payroll and it is also used as an identifying number on identification cards issued to each employee.

The social insurance number is requested by both the Department of Consumer Affairs and Environment and the Department of Justice to facilitate criminal record checks of individuals who seek licences as agents or brokers in the real estate field or who require licences as security agents and operators. There is also the requirement for the social insurance number on application forms for driver's permits and driver's licences. In these cases the number is used purely as a secondary identifier of applicants.

One use of the social insurance number which is unique to this province is the requirement for employers to provide personal data to the School Tax Authorities of the province. Under the School Tax Authority Act of Newfoundland, all employers are required to provide a list of their employees to the local School Tax Authorities. There is a provision in this Act that biographical data, such as name, address, place of employment and the social insurance number, be provided. The data are requested to enable the local Tax Authorities throughout the province to levy a direct taxation on individual employees who reside in the School Tax Authority area.

The School Tax Authorities consist of appointed officials who act for local school boards. Although the requirement to provide information to the School Tax Authorities has been questioned by some employers in the province, the government has confirmed that the procedure is required by law and the government itself as an employer complies with the legislation.

The province of Newfoundland has a central computer service for the storage and retrieval of government data. In this province, a Provincial Crown Corporation with a Board of Directors provides the computer services to the Government. This Study was informed by officials of the corporation that most of the data used by the Newfoundland government is now on computer. The data are programmed to the needs of the individual departments of the provincial government, and data are not linked with other programs unless consistent with the program requirement. In such cases, written authorization from the relevant department heads is required before information is released. The release of information is not necessarily contingent on the use of the social insurance number as the key. Officials appreciate that unauthorized linkage may be keyed to the social insurance number but stressed that unauthorized linkage could also take place based on other key identifiers.

The consensus of officials interviewed in Newfoundland was that if the use of the social insurance number were restricted by legislation, this province would simply use another unique personal identifier, most likely the medicare plan number, but the changeover would be at great inconvenience and cost.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

In the province of Prince Edward Island, the social insurance number was adopted for the medical health and hospital services plans administered by the Provincial Department of Health. To be eligible for such services, all residents of the province must have a social insurance number. Therefore all persons born in the province of Prince Edward Island are issued a social insurance number at birth.

In July 1970, an agreement was entered into between the province of Prince Edward Island, the Federal Department of National Health and Welfare and the Unemployment Insurance Commission, whereby the Vital Statistics Branch within the provincial Ministry of Health could obtain social insurance numbers for all persons born subsequent to the agreement. Every person born in the province of Prince Edward Island is registered at the Vital Statistics Division. This division in turn sends an application form directly to the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission for

the issuance of a social insurance number. The card is then returned directly to the parents by the CEIC but the corresponding name and number of the child and the parents' names and numbers are returned to the Vital Statistics Division and maintained as part of its records. The name and the social insurance number of the individual are then provided to the other Health Service sectors for their use. It is interesting that this data base maintained by Vital Statistics is not on computer.

There are nine separate and distinct programs administered by the Provincial Government in the medicare field but officials assured members of this study that although most data are computerized, and although each program uses the social insurance number as the unique personal identifier, there is no linkage between programs.

The Department of Social Services reported that the social insurance number is used as a common identifier to assist in establishing positive identification of those eligible for social benefits. Because of common surnames, such as McDonald and Gallant, difficulties had been encountered in the past. The Social Services Department also exchanges information with the Department of Health to avoid duplication of services and in this context, the social insurance number is used as the common key.

Other departments of the government record the social insurance number as a secondary key for identification, and the number is used for the normal employee staff and payroll systems.

The social insurance number is also used as an identification number in processing claims by the Workmen's Compensation Board. The files in which the numbers appear are held separately by the Workmen's Compensation Board and are considered privileged files.

In keeping with the Provincial Election Act, the name of each eligible voter is recorded on computer and his social insurance number is listed and eventually made public. According to the Chief Electoral Officer for this province, the social insurance number has been recorded so that the province could positively identify each voter. In former elections, this practice caused quite a controversy when the electoral list was published and a recommendation was made by the Chief Electoral Officer in his report of 1979 to discontinue the practice.

This province uses the social insurance number to a large extent in facilitating the administration of programs directed to residents. It is interesting to note that government information and data are computerized and stored on one computer in the Department of Finance. Officials of this Department assured this study that, although information and data may be exchanged between departments, such exchange would be consistent with departmental mandates, and, in any event, data would be exchanged in the normal course of inter-departmental business, subject to strict data handling controls. Although it was conceded that the social insurance number could be used as a key to link information between programs stored on the computer, such linkage would have to be authorized.

Officials in the province of Prince Edward Island believed that restricting the use of the social insurance number would not serve the desirable purpose of protecting individual privacy but would in effect result in considerable inconvenience and increased cost in the provision of services to constituents.

NOVA SCOTIA

In the province of Nova Scotia, the Medical Services Insurance plan covered by the Health Services and Insurance Act, makes extensive use of the social insurance number for identification purposes. The services includes child dental care programs and senior citizens' pharmacard services. The reponsibility for the administrative function of registration of eligible residents (an important factor as all services are funded by the provincial government), the processing and payment of claims, and the production of statistical reports on a patient basis, rests with Maritime Medical Care Incorporated (MCC) through contract with the province. Use is made of computer technology to perform these administrative functions and a unique numbering system to identify clients was established, using the social insurance number of the head of the household and adding an additional digit to denote each member of a family unit:

S.I.N. 000,000,000+1 - Head of household or single adult over 18 years
S.I.N. 000,000,000+2 - For spouse
S.I.N. 000,000,000+3 - For first child
S.I.N. 000,000,000+4 - For second child
S.I.N. 000,000,000+5 - For third child

To settle claims, certain basic information is exchanged with the province's Computer Services Branch within the Department of Finance, and the Medical Services Insurance (MSI) number is provided as the identifying key. The Workmens' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia also records the MSI number of its claimants and the Board matches this with MSI data in order to detect duplicate claims of medical services or claims submitted under the wrong plan.

Where MSI data has been released to universities or to Statistics Canada for research or statistical purposes under the authority of the Health Services and Insurance Act, the MSI number is scrambled to avoid identification of an individual's personal medical data.

The Department of Social Services in the province of Nova Scotia makes use of the social insurance number in communicating with federal social agencies to determine if a client may be receiving other types of social benefits. The purpose of this exchange of information is to avoid duplication of service provided to any one client and to avoid fraudulent claims. Similarly, the number has been used for the same purposes between the Provincial and Municipal levels of Government which provide social services. Provision of the social insurance number is not a mandatory requirement for participation in programs administered by the department. The number is simply used as an identifier of persons with similar names. Of approximately 40,000 clients, 10,000 have not provided their social insurance numbers.

Aside from the use of the social insurance number for the normal staffing and pay related systems, departments and agencies of government in the province f Nova Scotia have used the number:

- to assist in identifying teachers in connection with annual school grant claims made by local boards of education to the Department of Education
- to assist the Public Trustee's office in administering estates of deceased persons and to establish the bona fides of an estate
- as an employee number in the Department of Transport
- as an assistance in confirming the financial standing of potential borrowers prior to the approval of mortgages by the Nova Scotia Housing Commission

- on various licence application forms submitted to and administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs, to facilitate criminal record checks of applicants,
- as an identifying claimant number on all Workmens' Compensation Board claims (Officials in the Workmen's Compensation Board claimed that the social insurance number was invaluable in distinguishing between the many persons of similar names in the province.)
- to assist the Nova Scotia Power Commission in tracing and identifying persons who have not paid accounts or whose accounts are disputed (It was indicated that this Crown Corporation lost up to 5 million dollars annually in unpaid accounts but, since the requirement for the social insurance number of new clients, the Corporation reduced write-offs by 26%, 20% and 19% respectively over a three month period. Part of this reduced loss is attributed to verification of information with the Corporation's bad debt file, using the social insurance number as an important identifying key.)
- on cheques issued by the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission to its employees (This program was initiated and approved by the employees themselves to assist in establishing identity when cashing their cheques throughout the province.)

Computer services for the Government of Nova Scotia are provided by the Bureau of Management Consulting and Computer/Communication Services, which is under the responsibility of the Department of Finance.

The extent of information stored, retrieved and exchanged is established by the ministry of government on whose behalf the data are programmed. Exchanges of information may take place between government departments but such exchanges would be based on the normal execution of the department's mandate.

The opinion of Provincial officials is that little would be gained by restricting the use of the social insurance number.

NEW BRUNSWICK

In 1970, it was mutually agreed between the province of New Brunswick, the federal department of Health and Welfare and the Unemployment Insurance Commission that New Brunswick would use the social insurance number as the basis for its medical insurance number. The medicare program registered individuals in family units. Thus, as in Nova Scotia, the head of a household and all members of the family would be issued the same medicare number made up of the social insurance number but with a given letter, e.g.:

000,000,000 A - head of household
000,000,000 B - spouse
000,000,000 C - first child
000,000,000 D - second child

This study was informed that in 1972, because of delay in clients' receiving their social insurance numbers from the federal government, the province devised its own health and medicare insurance number and all new clients are now registered according to the new system. Nevertheless, 50% of New Brunswick residents are still recorded under the original system. Health data records are computerized but are not available to other areas of government because of the sensitivity of the information involved.

In the field of social services, as recently as 4 July,1980 a federal-provincial agreement was signed by federal and New Brunswick officials allowing the exchange of information respecting clients who claim social-economic service benefits. Information is exchanged to discourage fraudulent claims being made against either government and to avoid duplication of services or payments where fraud is not involved. The social insurance number is a key identifying link in these transactions.

In the near future, most records of the Department of Social Services will be computerized and the social insurance number will be the key identifier used in records of provincial services. This data will not be linked to other government programs.

The Liquor Licencing Board of New Brunswick requires that all waiters or waitresses who serve liquor have a permit and the social insurance number is requested on applications for such permits to

facilitate criminal record checks. The Liquor Licencing Board also issues "age of majority" identification cards to those who apply for them, and the social insurance number is requested upon application for the cards as an assistance in identification. The social insurance number is not retained in the Board's records after the card is issued.

The province of New Brunswick records the social insurance number of employees in pay and staff related services according to federal requirements. However, the Public Service Commission of New Brunswick does not use the social insurance number as an employee number.

The social insurance number is not extensively used in this province and there is no evidence to suggest that information is linked improperly using the number. All data processing and computer services are provided by the Directorate of Data Processing within the provincial Department of Supply and Services. The control of the information, however, rests with the agency or department that requests the data processing service.

QUEBEC

With the advent of the Canada Pension Plan in 1964, the province of Quebec implemented the Quebec Pension Plan using the federal social insurance numbering system according to an agreement with the federal government. Since then, there has been extensive use made of the social insurance number in this province's programs.

In addition to the statutory requirements for the use of the number under federal legislation, some Quebec acts also contained provisions concerning the social insurance number. These are the Taxation Act, the Work Income Supplement Act, the Succession Duties Act, the Fuel Tax Act and the Wild-life Conservation Act. The regulations on transport, insurance, vocational training and wild-life conservation also make reference to the social insurance number.

The Quebec Health Insurance Board at its inception in 1970 adopted the social insurance number as the client number for medical and health services. The number was used until 1976 when a separate

numbering system was designed. The social insurance number is still used as a complementary identifier of claimants. Under the Health Insurance Act, however, all information obtained by the Board is confidential.

In view of the multitude of services offered to the population of Quebec by the Department of Social Affairs, extensive use is made of the social insurance number by this Department. The primary use of the number is to identify clients and to avoid duplication of services and fraudulent claims.

In court administration, under the Department of Justice, among those obliged to provide their social insurance numbers for identification purposes are:

a) persons charged with offences,
b) couples applying for civil marriage certificates,
c) prospective jurors.

The Probation and Houses of Detention Branch requests the social insurance number from inmates upon admission to establish identity and this information may be exchanged with courts or social agencies. The number is also used by the Youth Protection Committee to trace individuals involved in child neglect cases. The Quebec Provincial Police collects and retains the number on several forms as general identification for law enforcement purposes. Some such forms are application permits for firearms and explosives and forms for the registration of visitors to detention centres.

Under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Cooperative and Financial Institutions, the social insurance number is provided by individuals wishing to obtain insurance agent certificates, appraisers' certificates and sales licences or permits for itinerant salesmen, health studio operators, money lenders, used car salesmen and securities salesmen. The number is also used in bankruptcy proceedings. In all these cases, the number is used to establish the identity of the applicant.

The Department of Labour and Manpower records the social insurance number of applicants for registration in various trades and of those who have reached certain levels in their training.

In the Department of Recreation, Fish and Game, the social insurance number is requested on applications for hunters' licences and trapping

permits. Fur trade licence holders are required to keep a register with entries of the details of all transactions. The register is to include the social insurance number of the individuals with whom they do business. This procedure was adopted pursuant to Section 35 of the Wild-life Conservation Act. Also, the number is requested by Sports Federations from individuals registering as instructors, coaches, referees, etc., in sports programs.

The Motor Vehicle Bureau within the Department of Trannport requests the social insurance number from applicants for driver's permits and taxi licences. The social insurance number does not become the actual permit number but it does appear on the face of the permit and is used as a secondary identifier to check the validity of the permit itself when required. In the Expropriation Service of the Ministry, the number is requested from individuals whose property is being expropriated. The Quebec Transport Commission also requests the social insurance number from those seeking permits to provide taxi, airport transportation or bulk transportation services.

The social insurance number is included as identification on building passes issued to some employees of the Quebec government by The Department of Public Works and Supply. Hydro Quebec has adopted the social insurance number as its employee number. And, under regulations pursuant to the Act respecting the Commission de Contrôle des permis d'alcool, there is a requirement for those seeking permits to provide their social insurance numbers.

In the province of Quebec, information is gathered, stored and exchanged consistent with the administrative needs or mandate of the departments or agencies. The social insurance number, when recorded as an identifier, does become part of this information exchange and proves to be an essential element in this province's programs. Administrators mentioned that eliminating this important identifier would result in a considerable increase in operating costs.

ONTARIO

The following submission was received from the Province of Ontario after the completion of this report and it is therefore included in its entirety without comments:

December 4, 1980

Now that the Government of Ontario has had an opportunity to study the report of the Ontario Commission on Freedom of Information and Individual Privacy, I am pleased to pass on our proposed policy relating to the use of the Social Insurance Number within the Government of Ontario and its agencies.

The Government of Ontario recognizes and supports the fundamental and legitimate rights of citizens to privacy and confidential communications.

At the same time this Government recognizes its responsibilities for administrative efficiency in the Ontario public service and for ensuring that laws and programs which have been sanctioned by the Legislature or by the Parliament of Canada are equitably and correctly implemented and, where necessary, enforced.

Citizens must be able to interact easily with their governments and have ready access to their own files. Also they expect as far as possible, through the provision of adequate safeguards and controls, to be protected against fraud, misuse of public funds and the consequences of criminal actions of others.

Our position on the collection and use of Social Insurance Numbers will be based on the following:

a. There are many well-known reasons supporting the use of a coded unique personal identifier (such as a permanent number) in modern large filing systems including automated data banks. It supplements information such as name, address and age which is variable, lengthy and surprisingly often out of date.

b. The use of a coded unique personal identifier protects the subject (the person identified) by reducing the incidence of mistaken identity arising from common names, errors in spelling, etc., and by limiting the need for other distinguishing information avoids the need for repeated disclosure of personal information (such as address, age, etc.) to a large number of people.

c. The S.I.N. in Canada was initially adopted for the administration of income related programs such as unemployment insurance and the Canada Pension Plan.

d. Its authorized use was extended to the Department of National Revenue (now Revenue Canada) for tax administration purposes and as a consequence the S.I.N. is used on documentation relating to personal income.

e. Through the Canada Pension Plan itself and because of the obvious relationship between earned income and income support or income redistribution programs the S.I.N. is a link used by governments to establish eligibility in these areas.

f. Where the S.I.N. is a necessary or justified part of the data included in a personal record pertaining to income, its use as the unique identifier of that file for purposes involving data processing and data retrieval is a logical step. To prohibit the use of S.I.N. because a given transaction may not be directly related to the income aspect of the same file would be inefficient without adding to the protection of privacy or the reassurance of concerned citizens.

g. Some hospitals are using the S.I.N. as a "permanent" patient file identification number because over 80 per cent of patients being admitted (whether conscious or unconscious) carry this identification on their person and because this expedites admissions and access to any previous treatment at these hospitals. It may be advantageous to the patient.

h. On the other hand, there is no need to link income related programs to such data banks as driver control, vehicle ownership, professional registers, hunting licenses, criminal records or hotel registration nor to such financial transactions as credit approval, cheque certification or foreign exchange.

i. The widespread belief that disclosure of the S.I.N. is tantamount to providing access to any file or data bank which uses this number as a personal identifier must be recognized. However, access to computerized data banks is best controlled by "pass words" and other security measures. Illegal access or unauthorized dissemination of privileged information is not prevented by building duplication into systems which need to be linked for legitimate and justifiable purposes.

j. Ontario's Commission on Freedom of Information and Individual Privacy ("The Williams Commission") has provided an excellent analysis of pros and cons of various aspects associated with "personal identifiers", including the use of the S.I.N. Reference should be made especially to Chapter 36 of the Commission's report "Public Government for Private People", published in September, 1980.

Consistent with the above facts and the recommendations of the Commission on Freedom of Information and Individual Privacy, the Government of Ontario will limit and control the use of the Social Insurance Number in its operations under the following guidelines:

1. The Social Insurance Number will continue to be used in connection with any Government inquiry, request, transaction , record or operation which directly and specifically pertains to the income of an individual (these are hereafter called "income related programs").

2. Where a file, record or data bank includes the S.I.N. as the unique personal identifier in connection with an income related program, the same identifier may be used to identify the file or record.

3. Because of the potential for life saving actions, hospitals and other medical data banks will be permitted to use the S.I.N. as a patient file identifier pending a decision to establish a unique personal identifier for health programs.

4. All other requirements to use the S.I.N. as a unique personal identifier in a record, file or data bank will be discouraged and eventually prohibited.

5. Access to personal data in all records, files, data banks, whether or not identified by or containing the S.I.N., especially where computer based, shall be effectively controlled and restricted and appropriate penalties and/or other deterrents shall be legally established to discourage violations.

The implementation of these policy guidelines will require some adjustment of administrative practices by some ministries and agencies of the Government of Ontario and no doubt will involve some alterations in established routines and procedures of some businesses and institutions within the province.

However, the restriction of the use of the S.I.N. to income related data files (with a temporary exemption for hospital files where the S.I.N. is currently in use) is deemed to be a rational solution to a problem where the mutually conflicting demands of citizens -- the demand for privacy and the demand for efficient government -- must be recognized and addressed.

The Government of Ontario intends to implement the guidelines on governmental use of the Social Insurance Number on June 30, 1981.

I trust this explanation of Ontario's position relating to the Social Insurance Number will be helpful in your study of the subject and I look forward to your report.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Alan W. Pope
Minister

MANITOBA

The health service provided to the citizens in the province of Manitoba is funded completely by the federal and provincial governments on a cost sharing basis and the program is administered by a Crown Corporation, the Manitoba Health Services Commission. The client's account number is a six digit number used only for provincial health services. A space for the social insurance number is provided on the Manitoba

Health Services Community (MHSC) application form for registration of new residents to the province. Here, provision of the number is not mandatory and where provided, it is used only to help identify applicants. The number has never been used by the province in demographic or epidemiological studies.

The Department of Community Services and Corrections is responsible for social services in Manitoba. It communicates with the federal government to avoid providing duplicate social services to clients. The social insurance number, however, is not used as a unique identifier within the Department. There is a space for the number on the client form for continuing home care services but the space is not used. The Department also has the responsibility to administer estates of those who are incapable or incompetent through mental illness to handle their own affairs. The social insurance number is of assistance in this matter.

The social insurance number is also used in the following areas of government services:

- The number is requested on applications to verify payments of Manitoba resource purchases and calculation of the associated provincial income tax rebate to freehold mineral owners.

- The Security Commission requests the social insurance number on application forms for real estate agents.

- The Department of Agriculture uses the social insurance number to avoid duplication of payments in the Beef Income Assistant Program.

- The Department of Education uses the social insurance number in the Teachers' Certification and Records Branch in its Teacher Information System and General Educational Development Testing Programs. The Community Colleges Division uses the social insurance number on various forms associated with student registration.

The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, administers the Shelter Allowance for Elderly Residents Program (SAFER) and the Critical Home Repair Plan

(CHRP) whereby financial assistance may be apportioned, depending on the income of applicants, to elderly persons or to persons requiring emergency repairs to a residence. The social insurance number may be requested and used to assist in establishing the financial standing of a person wishing to receive benefits through these programs.

The Department of Labour and Manpower reported that complainants to the Employment Standards Division are requested to provide their social insurance numbers. The numbers are then used by investigating officers to confirm information on payroll records applicable to the individual who filed the complaint in order to assist in establishing that a complaint has been made in good faith. Once or twice a year, this Division forwards a list of the names and the social insurance numbers of persons they are endeavouring to locate to Revenue Canada in Ottawa. Revenue Canada provides new addresses if available.

The social insurance number is obtained on admission of inmates to Correctional Institutions for adults. The number is normally not used once identity has been established.

Finally, the province of Manitoba uses the social insurance number for the normal staff and pay related systems.

According to the Auditor General of Manitoba the foregoing constitutes the extent of the use of the social insurance number for information gathering purposes in the Province.

SASKATCHEWAN

The Department of Health administers the various hospital and medical services programs in the province of Saskatchewan. Under the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Medical Plan, the social insurance number is not recorded in any data banks but it is requested from an individual applying for a Saskatchewan Health Card. The number in this instance is used to verify that the applicant is legally a resident of Canada. Services are not refused if a number is not provided but in such case alternative identification is requested. The Medical Services Division makes no use of the social insurance number but there is a space for the number on a form which is

shared with the Saskatchewan Dental Plan. The Saskatchewan Dental Plan collects the social insurance number from dentists in private practice who submit claims to the dental plan. The number is then used in a computer as an identifier of the dentist who provided the service. If the dentist refuses to provide his social insurance number, the dental plan system creates a dummy number.

Clients for rehabilitation applying to the Community Services Division, under the Saskatchewan Alcohol Commission, are required to provide their social insurance numbers on the initial contact sheet. The number is used as an identifier because a number of the clients receiving services are transients who do not have a Saskatchewan Hospital Plan number.

The Department of Education has two computer systems which use the social insurance number as an identification number. These are the Teacher Record System and the Student Record System. The number is used for identification purposes only and if it is not provided, a dummy number will be used. The information in these systems is not shared and is used solely for internal purposes.

The Department of Labour has requested the number on complaint forms submitted to the Labour Standards Branch. There it is used for identification and for comparison purposes to establish the bona fides of a complaint. The number has also been used as a tracing device to locate complainants through Canada Employment and Immigration Commission records. The Workmen's Compensation Board also uses the number for identification of claimants but the number is deleted when the records are passed to the Department of Labour.

The social insurance number has also been requested on licence applications issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs. The Department of Agriculture has also used the social insurance number to establish identification of claimants for crop insurance, farm start loan assistance and for production and marketing honoraria paid for animal husbandry performances.

A brief from the Saskatchewan Department of Continuing Education accompanied the submission received from the Saskatchewan government. This brief

addresses the issues of the social insurance number from the view point of that department only and outlines the concerns about using a unique personal identifier in a computer system. For this reason, it is quoted in its entirety:

A BRIEF TO THE PRIVACY COMMISSIONER CANADA SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER STUDY FROM THE SASKATCHEWAN DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

A. SUMMARY OF BRIEF

This brief is presented to the Privacy Commissioner Canada Social Insurance Number Study at her request for briefs from government departments. It will outline the Department of Continuing Education's presentuse of the social insurance number, purpose of such use, use as a data linkage variable, and implications of regulation or prohibition of the collection or use of Social Insurance Numbers.

The major recommendation of the brief is that:

- the Federal Government must articulate a clear policy statement and institute legislative guidance about the inter linking of information systems. Such legislation must ensure that information provided by an individual is used only for the purpose for which the individual understands that the information is being collected and that before such information is passed to another system that the individual who provided the information is contacted and his/her permission received before such transfer.

B. EXTENT TO WHICH SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER IS COLLECTED AND USED

The Social Insurance Number is collected on all student registration forms completed by post-secondary students in the province of Saskatchewan. The information is stored in the student's computer and/or paper file, along with other registration information. When conducting surveys of graduates of post-secondary programs the Social Insurance Number is again included in the "identification" section of such surveys. As well, it is anticipated that future student record systems established in the province will be designed to include the use of the Social Insurance Number in the identification section.

C. PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER IS USED

The Social Insurance Number is used as one of, as the primary, and in some cases the only means of identifying a student participant or respondent. The reason for such use is to ensure that accurate records are maintained for that individual. In the area of education, the Department is often called upon to provide certification or confirmation of participation of a student in one of its programs. The Social Insurance Number provides an accurate means of identifying the original participant regardless of his or her present or previous physical location and regardless of name changes which may have occurred as a result of changes in marital status of the individual. Further, the Social Insurance Number is used in the recording of

survey responses because it facilitates the correction of data entry errors which occur with data capture. Our surveys are concerned with the group responses which have occurred, thus we do not capture the individual's name and address but rather use the Social Insurance Number for linking to the individual's responses. In this manner, when data entry errors are identified when undertaking this group response analysis, it is possible to use the Social Insurance Number along with appropriate program identification numbers to return to the original questionnaire and by using very simple computer editing techniques correct the error in data entry which has occurred. Finally, the Social Insurance Number is used to group together the individual class participation information which occurs so that the program managers and the senior departmental officials will have information on the numbers of multiple participants, their areas of multiple participation and the extent to which this level of multiple participation is changing from year to year.

D. USE OF SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER AS A DATA-LINKAGE VARIABLE

The Social Insurance Number is most definitely used by this Department as a data-linkage variable. However, such linkage is used purely within the system in which data capture has occurred. In other words, it is used to facilitate the updating, correction, and addition to information within a single system. It is not used in order to allow the linking of information collected within one system to be

compared with or consolidated with the information collected in another system. It has not been nor will be the intention of this Department to attempt to assemble or conglomerate the information about a single individual by tying together a number of information and planning systems. Such activity would not serve any management planning function of this Department and as such would not be carried out because of its inability to justify the costs involved in such intersystem linking. It should be noted that even if some other individual or government department offered to pay for such linking that the Department of Continuing Education has established a strong entrenched precedent which forbids such access. Information will be provided only on the number of cases meeting a particular criteria and only if such information will in no way provide the identity of an individual. Further, it is possible to obtain this information only through the work performed by members of the Department of Continuing Education, thus providing a further level of protection to the information.

E. WHETHER COLLECTION AND USE OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER REPRESENTS A THREAT TO THE PRIVACY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Such collection and use of Social Insurance Numbers does lead to the possible threat to privacy of the individual. Techniques do indeed exist which would allow for tying together of information from systems to form a very comprehensive information package about a single individual. However, it should be realized that the technology is equally advanced

to provide such tying together of information regardless of the means of identification. Once an identifier (name, Social Insurance Number, address, health care number, drivers licence number, birthdate, bank account number, credit card number) is in a machine readable format, the work to create tables of equivalence (name "JONES" in System 1 equal to "900487562" in System 2 equal to "160426" in System 3) can be carried out with relative ease. Having made such a connection, the facility for the linking and collection of information exists and no further manipulation is required to continue such automatic linking in the future. As well, it must be realized that for a privacy violation to occur using the Social Insurance Number as the identity element, a major degree of collusion between information system managers is required. Encription techniques and password protection in machine communication exist at a level today as to require the need for such deciphering keys to be available in order to carry out the linking function. Without such "key" information the data remains as only so much a collection of numbers and letters.

F. POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE REGULATION OR PROHIBITION OF THE COLLECTION OR USE OF SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBERS

To invoke legislation governing the use or prohibition of use of the Social Insurance Number will not deal with the problem at hand. For the Department of Continuing Education it will mean an expense and inconvenience while another "identifier" system is adopted. It would not be possible

to stop collecting post-secondary education activity information. Our responsibility will continue to exist to provide certification and confirmation to participants in post-secondary education. Such activity can be done only if we maintain records on the people's activities using some identification technique which will allow us to retrieve this information. Survey information results will continue to be linked to some "identifier". Again, the purpose is not to provide the ability to identify an individual's answers but rather to be able to correct errors which have occurred in the compilation of the data. Also, the need to know levels of multiple participation in education will continue to exist for program planning and such activity will necessitate the linking of participant information.

In conclusion, it is the Saskatchewan Department of Continuing Education's feeling that the problem ("the use of the Social Insurance Number, and the implications of such use for the privacy of individuals") as stated within the terms of reference of this study is in fact not the problem which is occurring. Rather, the problem we need to address and provide legislative guidance about concerns the inter-linking of information systems. It is necessary to ensure that information which is captured in one information system is not passed onto another information system for its use without careful guidelines to protect both the "need to know" and the "accuracy" rights of the individual about whom the information exists. It must be ensured that information provided

by an individual is used only for the purpose for which the individual understands that the information is being collected. It must be ensured that, before such information is passed to another system that the individual who provided the information is contacted and his/her permission received before such transfer. Finally we need to provide individuals with the information about what systems exist with information concerning that individual and provide a means whereby the individual can inspect and correct/delete information which is kept on file. Such then is the Department's belief of the recommendations which should be forthcoming from this study. We are in the age of electronic information storage and retrieval, let us introduce provisions to address this question and not get lost in the side issue of but one of the MANY "identifiers".

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The response received from the province of British Columbia was confined to the following comments on the use of the social insurance number in the Provincial Ministry of Health.

In 1972-73, the Medical Services Plan amalgamated all licenced carriers, and all persons covered by group plans were transferred to the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia using the social insurance number as the plan identity number. This number was used because employers had social insurance numbers on record and the numbers could be used as a permanent identifiers. The use of the social insurance number also provided common linkage between plan files and employers' files on individual clients eligible for services. The number is required for validation of claims and premium assistance. It is also collected by the Division of Speech and Hearing in order to exchange information with other patient data systems. In the area of Emergency Health Services, the number is

collected by ambulance crews as a unique patient identifier and an aid in the collection of accounts due. The Occupational Health Service and Community Vocational Rehabilitation Service also require the social insurance number as universal patient identification.

On 18 August, 1977, the province of British Columbia proclaimed the Systems Act. Under this Act, the British Columbia Systems Corporation was established to be responsible for data processing for the government of the province.

Section 19 of the Systems Act directs the manner in which data shall be treated and imposes penalties:

> 19.(1) Every officer, employee and agent of the corporation shall keep secret and in strict confidence all information coming to his knowledge during the course of or by reason of his employment by the corporation except insofar as he may be authorized by the board to disclose it.
>
> (2) The contravention of subsection (1) by an officer or employee of the corporation constitutes just and reasonable cause for dismissal.
>
> (3) An officer or employee who contravenes subsection (1) is liable to compensate a person or the Government for loss or damage suffered by that person or by the Government, as the case may be, by reason of the contravention.
>
> (4) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other Act, an action pursuant to subsection (3) shall be heard and determined by the Supreme Court.
>
> (5) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding $5,000.
>
> (6) The disclosure of information in the possession of a government entity by an employee of

> the government entity to the corporation or its employees for the purpose of, or related to, the provision of data processing services to the government entity
>
> (a) does not constitute a contravention of a prohibition or restriction against disclosure, communication, or publication of information contained in another enactment, other than the Statistics Act, applying to the government entity, and
>
> (b) does not constitute a violation by the officer or employee of his oath of secrecy in respect of the information disclosed to the corporation for the purposes of this Act.

YUKON

When the Yukon Territorial Government adopted a health care insurance plan, it was recognized that an identification number was needed for insured persons. In April, 1972, an agreement was entered into between the Yukon government, the Federal Department of National Health and Welfare and the Unemployment Insurance Commission to use the social insurance number for this purpose. Section 17 of the Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan Ordinance states that every resident shall register for the Plan. The Yukon government has introduced procedures (similar to those in Prince Edward Island) to ensure that newborn infants are issued social insurance numbers. Birth Registration Forms, available at all hospitals, are signed by either parent and are forwarded to the Vital Statistics section of the Yukon Department of Health Services. As the Birth Registration Forms are received, applications for social insurance numbers are completed, batched and mailed monthly to the Central Index of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC). The Deputy Registrar signs the application forms. The social insurance card itself is sent directly to the parents, and a form is returned to the Vital Statistics section, showing the name, date of birth, social insurance number and registration number of the new recipient. The social insurance number block on the

Birth Registration Form is then completed and the form received from CEIC is destroyed. Birth Registration Forms are filed by date of birth, alphabetically by surname. Marriage and death certificates also contain the social insurance number. Copies of these forms are sent to Statistics Canada. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development receives copies of all forms relating to native people (marked confidential - official use only). Certified copies of the Birth Registration Form may be provided to the territorial Department of Human Resources (for adoptions, paternity or child neglect cases), to the courts or to federal immigration officials. The R.C.M.P. will occasionally ask to verify birth information. When the Health Care Insurance Plan was introduced, some residents, including native peoples, did not have a social insurance number. They were given dummy social insurance numbers for the purpose of the Plan. The numbers were used to identify a complete family. For treaty Indians, the band number was used to form the number. These instances are less frequent as newborn children are issued social insurance numbers at birth. Section 19 of the Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan Ordinance specifies the circumstances under which information about an individual may be provided. Statistical information must be delivered in such a way that the individual cannot be identified. The Health Care Plan files contain the medical history of the insured person in record of payment documents, as well as details of the individual's employment history in the record of contributions by the employer. Information is provided to Statistics Canada in tabular form, on the type and frequency of surgical procedures. Information is also exchanged with the territorial Workers' Compensation Board to determine who should pay for treatment.

The social insurance number is used as the primary identifier in medical records used for the health plan. Each claim card is computerized and microfilmed. An on-line computer system has recently been established to provide information on the premium status of the individual subscriber.

The Workers' Compensation Board uses social insurance numbers as identifiers. When a report of an accident is received, the Board writes to the claimant's employer to obtain a report. The Board indicated that it is convenient to indicate the surnames and social insurance numbers of the employees

in exchanges of correspondence with employers. On medical reports, claimants' social insurance numbers appear where, for example, there are two persons of the same name who have back problems. The social insurance number is used to distinguish between claimants.

The social insurance number is requested by the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs from individuals seeking licences as securities dealers, real estate brokers or agents and the Yukon Liquor Corporation asks for social insurance numbers from those seeking liquor licences. In both departments the requests are made to facilitate criminal record checks.

Finally, the Department of Education asks students to provide their social insurance numbers as identification when they write twelfth grade examinations.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The social insurance number is not used in the Northwest Territories Health Insurance Plan. As there is a cost-sharing of medical care between the Federal Department of National Health and Welfare (Medical Services Branch) and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, a unique seven digit identifying number was developed which would indicate the status of the recipient.

The Safety Division of the territorial Department of Justice and Public Services is responsible for implementing and enforcing health and safety standards and the territorial Miners Safety Division requires that persons working in a dust exposure occupation are required to have an annual medical checkup and chest x-ray. For the initial two-year period, the individual's medical clearance for working in a mine can be cancelled for any reason which would make that individual unsuitable for such work. This protects the worker from developing an occupation related disease and the employer is protected against claims in instances where an individual may have developed silicosis elsewhere. The Registrar of Miners Medical Services is responsible for the storing and production of medical records. For purposes of the ordinance, the number is requested on Mine Application Forms and Medical Forms. It was explained that this request is made to enable individual data to be related to medical records in order to prove, when necessary, the health status of an individual.

The Northwest Territories government employs approximately three thousand persons and must provide statutory information to the Federal Government on these employees using the social insurance number as the primary identifier. As this number was used for this purpose, in order to create an employee number the territorial government simply added the digit "2" to the employee's social insurance number.

In the Northwest Territories, individuals may also be asked for their social insurance numbers when applying for "age of majority" cards issued by the Licencing Board of the Liquor Control System or when seeking social assistance from the Department of Social Services. In these cases, the number is used to assist in establishing identity. The number, if available, is also requested from territorial inmates upon admission to the corrections program.

SUMMARY

The use of the social insurance number is not as widespread at the provincial and territorial levels of government as it is at the federal level. Nevertheless, the number is used for various purposes by each provincial or territorial government in Canada.

Provincial governments have similar obligations to those of the federal government to provide services and implement programs and they are also required to process data effectively and economically. In the view of administrators and data processors, the use of the social insurance number, with its unique identifying features, helps to reach these goals.

Provincial and territorial administrators also expressed an appreciation of the implications that the gathering and use of personal information for various purposes may have on the privacy of individuals. It was submitted that a balance must be struck between the need for privacy and a government's need to administer efficiently. All provinces and territories recognize this problem and strive to minimize unauthorized or improper use of personal data. Although not directly related to the uses of the social insurance number, it is worthwhile to mention that two provinces have already enacted legislation providing individuals the right of access to government information, including personal information, about

themselves. It is known that two other provinces are in the process of drafting similar legislation and eight provinces have laws respecting credit reporting and credit licencing. These laws delineate who may gather credit related information about individuals, and allow individuals to review and correct information about themselves.

Finally, some provinces have provided civil remedies by statute for invasion of privacy, specifically in the areas of unauthorized use of personal papers, photographs or portraits and electronic or physical surveillance. An example of the policy direction that provincial authorities may follow on the complex question of personal privacy is found in the three basic principles established by the Civil Code Revision Office in the Province of Quebec. These are:

I. Every person has the right to privacy.

II. No person may invade the privacy of another without his consent or unless he is expressly authorized by law.

In particular, no person may:

1. enter property lawfully occupied by another or take anything from that property;
2. voluntarily intercept or use any private communication;
3. voluntarily monitor or use the image or voice of any person in a private place;
4. observe a person's private life by any means;
5. use a person's name, image, likeness or voice for any purpose than the supplying of legitimate information for public opinion;
6. use any correspondence, manuscript or other personal document belonging to another;
7. divulge confidential information concerning the private life of another,

contained in a file administered by the State or by another person.

III. Every person has the right of access to any file concerning him which the law requires be kept.

When the information contained in that file is false, incomplete or not pertinent to the purpose of those who hold it, the person concerned may have the information removed or corrected, without prejudice to his other rights.

Most provincial officials appreciate that the social insurance number is a creation of the federal government but question whether the federal government has sole proprietorship. Many feel that their governments have adopted the social insurance number as an administrative tool in good faith and, in some cases, with the encouragement of the federal government. To now restrict its use or change rules in mid-stream would, in these officials' views, be costly, inconvenient and serve no useful purpose.

2.6 MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The same issues were explored pertaining to social insurance number use at the municipal levels of government as at the federal and provincial levels. The views of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities were sought, and selected municipalities with different population bases were visited. Findings were similar to those at the federal and provincial levels.

FINDINGS

In brief, the social insurance number is gathered and used by municipal administrations to establish the identity of individuals involved in municipal programs. The request for a social insurance number and the need to establish an individual's identity may range from an application for a taxi driver's licence to checking an individual's entitlement for a social service benefit. The number is requested by some municipalities when an individual obtains a library card and it is used as an account number with group carriers for employees' group insurance or dental plans. Certain larger municipalities use the social insurance number as an employee number and a few have included the number on municipal tax rolls as a secondary identifying feature. The number has also been used in tracing delinquent or unsettled accounts with municipal utility services, particularly if the individual concerned happens to be a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. Some municipal police forces record the social insurance number, if available, to assist in establishing identification and to facilitate law enforcement generally.

SUMMARY

Municipal governments do not collect as much personal data as other levels of government. The information gathered by a municipal government relates to the administration of municipal affairs only and is not normally exchanged for purposes of other programs.

The population size or tax structure base of a municipality also has a direct bearing on how data is processed. Very few small communities have computer systems and, therefore, for them the issue of data-linkage is not as serious.

PART III

DATA-LINKAGE AND THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

This portion of the report discusses the impact of computer technology on data-linkage and proposes a means to control inappropriate data-linkage and use of personal information.

3.1 THE COMPUTER

A computer is a machine; it operates as programmed unless it breaks down mechanically. It can duplicate many functions of the human brain, but as of the time of writing this report, it has not acquired a separate intelligence. Computers were first employed to produce numerical solutions to scientific problems, but they were never limited to numbers in order to function. Computers carry messages or data by means of the "on" or "off" states of minuscule, electronic elements. It is the switching on and switching off of the elements that allows the machine to display numbers, letters, and dark and bright spots to reproduce a picture: for example to simulate the trail of an airplane or a person's signature. In fact, any function that can be described, can be programmed for computer processing.

The switching on and switching off function has not changed since the invention of the computer, but the technology has improved. The size of the machinery has diminished, the speed of transactions has increased to the point of appearing to be instantaneous, the cost of the parts has plummeted and the applications of the technology have greatly increased.

One example will demonstrate the technological change that has taken place in the 1970's. Magnetic discs in common use now are thin and measure approximately 15 cm. in diameter. One can be purchased for $2.00 and it will store 250,000 characters. Video discs now entering the market are the size of a phonographic record; a pre-recorded video disc costs about $50.00 and one can store 25 million characters.

This report is not the proper vehicle for explaining the mechanisms of computers or their programming. But the conclusions of this study are

based, in part, on the understanding that, given sufficient resources, it would be possible to build a single computer facility that would be able to store all information in existence today and that the information could be shared with anyone with the capacity to receive it. No such computer facility exists, but the potential for its manufacture and the creation of smaller connected systems are related to issues of data-linkage. Moreover, the knowledge of that potential has an impact on how people react to the new technology and to data-linkage.

3.2 DATA-LINKAGE

Data-linkage is not a new concept, but it has acquired new dimensions because of the invention of the computer. Linkage of data occurs when separate sets of records referring to the same person or subject are matched or incorporated into one. The files in two sets of records may all be arranged under the social insurance numbers of the subjects. If the data were recorded on paper, retrieving and merging the files manually from the two sets would be relatively easy and not too time-consuming. If the records were filed under names or letters, instead of social insurance numbers, the mechanism for linkage would not change. Linkage of manual (i.e. paper) systems is easy, as long as the identifiers under which the individual records are filed refer to the same subjects in both systems. However, linkage of manual records based on data recorded in the files, rather than based on the file identifiers, would require time-consuming human effort to read and to analyse the data.

A collector of information who holds a set of manual records is not likely to consider linking those records with another set, unless it is necessary and unless the benefits outweigh the cost. But when data-linkage is inexpensive and easy, linkage will probably take place often, and for less important reasons. People may even browse for no reason other than curiosity.

Even more important than speed is the enlarged scope of data-linkage. As stated, linkage of data from "inside" a manual record requires time for reading and analysis. A computer can be programmed to scan all information inside a given set of records and to link data by any item of information contained in the record. Most large computers in use by governments and industry have the capacity to perform that task. By way of illustration, imagine a simple set of data such as a person's name, social insurance number, address, occupation, telephone number and year of birth, stored in one computer memory and in a different memory, the names and occupations only, of some but not all the individuals in the first set. It is simple to prepare a program to retrieve the names of those who are listed in both systems and to find those with the same occupation in both systems. It is just as easy to locate those who were born between 1930 and 1940 and who are doctors, or to link the social insurance

numbers of those who are identified as plumbers in the first set and who appear in the second set. The limitations or combinations depend on imagination and the laws of mathematical logic. Rapid changes in equipment and programming occur even while this study is being conducted, and they in turn change attitudes of individuals. Suddenly, one may reconsider Orwell's predictions for 1984 or whether the computer, Hal, in 2001: A Space Odyssey represents more than merely an author's monstrous invention.

3.3 THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER AS A DATA-LINKAGE DEVICE

The social insurance number works well as a data-linkage device, but it is not the only means by which individuals can be accurately identified, nor is it the only means by which data can be accurately and speedily matched or linked. If no individual were issued more than one social insurance number, the nine-digit number would be a unique identifier for each individual who had one. A unique identifier is a label that applies only to one subject and is constant. Voice prints and fingerprints are examples of unique identifiers. A combination of identifiers that are not unique may be used to positively identify an individual. Without a unique identifier, additional information, time and effort are required to identify with certainty to the degree required by the user of the data. When the identifiers are not unique a correspondingly larger number of them is needed to be certain that correct identification has taken place.

For example, a business may wish to locate a Mr. J. Smith who lives in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. A search may produce twelve J. Smith's in Prince Albert, but if their current addresses are known, that may reduce the probability to say, two or three. To separate those not wanted, the birthdates, first names, or driver's licence numbers might suffice. Needless to say, the use of the social insurance number would have simplified the process. However, the business will be able to identify the individual without the social insurance number if he is there. It may just take a little longer.

However, while the availability of the social insurance number may be crucial to saving time and costs if the data are recorded manually, it is of trivial importance when the data are stored in a computer. What is required in the latter case is simply a sufficient number of different items of information to distinguish individuals with the same name. There is every indication that most data storage will become computerized in the near future and that data-linkage by a series of known pieces of information will be neither difficult nor expensive. Knowledge of the social insurance number of individuals is not essential to successful, quick and accurate data-linkage. The need for the number will decrease as the speed and scope of computer capacity increases and

the cost decreases. To forbid or limit the use of the social insurance number in order to prevent data-linkage may be a wasted effort or at best of limited, short-term effect. But of even greater importance is the possibility that regulation of the use of the social insurance number might lull the public into a false sense of security and might divert attention and effort away from solving problems that do exist.

The real problems are, first, whether data-linkage by whatever means ought to be regulated and, second, whether the use of the social insurance number should be regulated for reasons that have nothing to do with data-linkage. Before those issues are discussed, questions of security and confidentiality of data will be dealt with here.

3.4 BREAKING INTO THE COMPUTER

In May, 1980, the papers reported that a number of students had been involved in a computer break-in. The Washington Post stated in an article by Lee Lescaze that:

> An eighth-grade student with two or more other students pulled off the computer caper in which terminals at an East Side Manhattan private school allegedly were used to penetrate Canadian computer systems; according to well-informed sources....
>
> An FBI investigation into the incident is continuing, and possible charges of wire fraud, stemming from the use of telephone lines in the incident, could result, but the age of the suspects has raised sensitive questions.
>
> No charges have been filed, and officials have not determined how much malice and how much mischief went into the planning of the illegal penetration of computer systems belonging to at least 21 Canadian companies and universities.
>
> The FBI obtained a search warrant for the school, and agents seized two plastic bags of computer printouts and a terminal log sheet when they carried out their search April 25....
>
> The extent of confusion or loss caused by the calls originating at the school is not known, but in one company, an unauthorized caller erased about a fifth of the computer. The loss was minimal, since that company was aware of the unauthorized entry into its system and had a back up that was able to restore the erasures in about 15 minutes.

In a letter to the Ottawa Citizen in July, 1980, Richard J. Ball, the Vice-President and General Manager for Honeywell Information Systems explained as follows:

> In response to the recent article concerning invasion of computer systems by vandals, we at Honeywell Information Systems wish to inform you that our computer system was not penetrated by an unauthorized user at the Dalton School in New York.
>
> After a thorough investigation, we were able to verify that there was absolutely no penetration of our computer system, a dual Level 66, Model 60/80, installed at our head office in Scarborough, Ont. Our company's name was mistakenly included with those that do not have the extremely sophisticated preventive measures we do.
>
> Even though it is possible for someone to obtain our system's common carrier dial-up number, the use of frequently-changed password procedures effectively blocks any unauthorized access to data. Our logs indicate that three attempts were made to penetrate our system between April 11 to 15.
>
> Each of these attempts were recognized as unauthorized and were terminated by the computer in under 30 seconds.
>
> The story has caused us considerable embarrassment and unnecessary alarm to clients who depend upon our system.

The above is just one of a number of reports of intrusions into computer banks. Such incidents clearly demonstrate that security problems exist.

3.5 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY OF DATA

As a general rule, the smaller the information system, the more secure the data will be. Similarly, the probability that the information will remain confidential is increased if fewer people have access to the system. The need for security and confidentiality is determined by the sensitivity of the data; this sensitivity in turn depends on the harm that would arise from disclosure. The arrival of computers has sensitized individuals to the need for personal information privacy. Information privacy should include the right to avoid having personal information provided for a given purpose used for another or shared with third parties without one's knowledge and consent. The demand for personal information privacy is made for reasons related to financial, psychological and personal safety. The apprehended harm that might occur from failure to protect personal information, could amount to financial loss, damage to property, injury, or threats to a person's safety or reputation. But the request for privacy may also be rooted in a desire simply to keep certain things private, to be left alone or free from embarrassment.

A specific problem exists in relation to the collection of personal information. Security is often ignored because the information may be readily available elsewhere, and the need to treat it as confidential or secure is not readily apparent to those who process it. Therefore, if personal data need protection from disclosure in certain circumstances, the incentive must be created by means of legislation and public education. It must be understood, however, that while people are entitled to data protection the protection is not and cannot, for practical legal and social reasons, always be absolute.

The confidentiality of data depends on both physical and intangible barriers. Physical barriers may consist of walls and locks of varying sophistication and of encryption of data. Intangible barriers depend on influences on human behaviour through training or sanctions. Intangible barriers may also be established by an absolute ban in law against disclosure, such as is found in the Official Secrets Act; privilege against disclosure accepted in courts, such as client-solicitor privilege; professional codes of ethics, for example patient-doctor communications, and custom, such as penitent-priest communications.

Personnel managers, counsellors and credit grantors are, as well, ordinarily expected to keep certain information confidential. Some of these barriers will preserve confidentiality against all demands for disclosure, others only against some. None will prevent thoughtless or dishonest disclosure and no amount of physical security of manual or computerized records will overcome misguided good intentions, carelessness, or corruption of those who handle data. For example, employees may disclose data because they feel their superiors ought to have done so, computer printouts or drafts of letters may be left in wastebaskets, and display screens on computers may be exposed to public view. Further, an intruder may gain access to the premises where data are stored in order to have an opportunity for espionage. As long as the incentive is sufficiently strong, someone can be found who will breach data security. No filing cabinet, no safe, no private or public computer network is totally secure; and because systems are most easily broken through human weakness, physical security and encryption are not enough.

It is also conceivable that a local or home computer terminal can be used to penetrate other computer systems carried on public networks. The intruder, using his imagination, may try various names, numbers and combinations. The method can be compared to that used by a safecracker who tries the owner's date of birth or telephone number as a combination because that is a code often used by owners of small safes. Or the intruder might simply try numbers in a systematic fashion. Eventually, he or she may find the format of the code and then use the same method to break the next barrier, in effect finding the secret password. The time and effort required to break into a computer system is often minimal because the intruder's own machine may be programmed to do it. It may be programmed to make attempts at odd intervals so that the intervention appears accidental and thus is less likely to be detected.

Information transmitted by satellite is particlarly vulnerable to penetration because to create a very narrow, finely-directed beam is costly. Therefore, the area in which a satellite message is received is usually fairly large and messages can easily be intercepted. Here, as well, the barriers can be broken by methodical experimentation or corruption of individuals. An additional problem arises in

respect of satellite transmission: people are able to eavesdrop as long as they have a receiving facility. There is no need to tap a wire. Satellite transmission is not intrinsically secure and intrusion leaves no trace.

It is also possible to penetrate a system that employs fibre optics. The signals may be sidetracked in the same manner as railway cars are diverted to a siding. The intruder may use induction tapping which would make it possible to sidetrack and amplify the signals simultaneously so that they appear at the original strength at the next stage. Detection of the intrusion would require an equally high level of sophistication.

As indicated, one means to provide security and confidentiality would be to code all data. Encryption or coding is good protection provided it is complicated enough and provided those who handle the data are honest and careful. But the principles applying to the use of padlock apply here: the better the locksmith, the better the lock picker becomes. Where the lock or encryption is of good quality and frequently changed, the intruder requires more insight and determination. It may take only one or two persons to create a security barrier, but a thousand may be put to work to break it if the exercise is deemed worthwhile. Similarly, the higher the level of integrity and sophistication of the persons who guard the data, the greater the skills must be of the intruder who seeks to corrupt them or circumvent their precautions. It follows that more than physical barriers are required to ensure confidentiality when confidentiality is desirable. The additional protection will have to be created by law.

Civil remedies exist in respect of the wrongful reproduction of original works, inventions and some trade secrets, and one who arranges to receive a satellite signal without authority may be guilty of operating without a licence under the Broadcasting Act or the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Act. The Criminal Code provides offences and sanctions against bribery and the breaking of physical security but the law does not protect adequately against what might be described as "theft" of data. A person who absconds with a disc containing a vast amount of personal information may be charged with theft, but of material worth less than $50.00. The one who, without

permission, gains access to a computer memory bank may be liable to a charge under the Criminal Code of using telecommunication time unlawfully. However, the offences bear no relationship to the value of the data taken or the potential harm to the victim and in neither case can the accused be charged with dishonest dealings relating to his possession of the data.

The conclusions drawn from the above are, first, that the capacity to store and manipulate data by computer is almost unlimited, second, that data-linkage does not depend on a unique identifier such as the social insurance number and third, that prohibition or limitation of the use of the social insurance number would not provide adequate protection against inappropriate data-linkage. While valid reasons exist for the demands by individuals that their personal data not be misused, Canadian laws are inadequate to prevent secondary, or secret use of personal data and unacceptable data-linkage. The next section will discuss the possibility of including a new offence in the Criminal Code to remedy this inadequacy.

3.6 PROPOSAL TO PREVENT MISUSE OF DATA

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL DATA

Individuals may provide personal information about themselves for a wide variety of reasons, such as to enhance social images, to obtain jobs, to answer surveys, or to purchase on credit. But once disclosed, personal information is not ordinarily controlled by the one who provided it. To meet some of the problems that were raised, a new criminal offence, related to dishonest dealings with the social insurance number, will be proposed in this section. However, because information in computer banks can be retrieved or linked by means of any identifier, the offence should cover transactions where protection in law is necessary to safeguard other forms of personal data in addition to the social insurance number.

The provision of personal information can be divided into five basic categories. They are those in which:

1) the recipient and the individual providing the information both know and intend that it will become generally available. Examples of such information are: information about a change of address given to postal authorities; information to be included in a telephone directory; information provided to a journalist during an interview; a voluntary confession to a police officer.

2) individuals exchange information in a social situation and, depending on the circumstances, expect it to be either repeated or kept confidential. Examples are: accounts of other relationships told to a spouse; the fictional or true life story told to a seat-mate on an airplane; the sharing of a personal disappointment with a friend.

3) the recipient provides a service or a benefit which is extended only on condition that the subject disclose certain personal data. Examples of this type of information are: medical history provided to obtain insurance; work and educational history submitted in order to be considered for employment; personal information disclosed to a government to obtain a permit.

4) the recipient has authority, in law, to obtain personal data from the subject and is expected to protect it from disclosure to outsiders. Examples: statements made for purposes of assessing income tax, information given for a census.

5) the recipient provides a medium or mechanism in which personal data are stored or conveyed. The recipient is expected to refrain from seeking access and to prevent others from gaining access to the data. Examples: the deposit of personal data in a public network for the personal use of the depositors; the disclosure of information in order to have it transmitted electronically.

It is not reasonable to expect new protective measures in respect of the data in the first two categories, but it is possible and desirable to provide some legal protection to secure the confidentiality of the data in the last three.

FEAR OF MISUSE OF DATA

Needless to say, it is reprehensible to use records dishonestly whether information is obtained by stealing a document from a file folder or by breaking into a computer. However, computers facilitate surreptious collection, use, modification and transmission of information and the public is becoming increasingly fearful of the capacity of the new technology. The fear is based on a realistic

assessment of the potential for misuse of data by means of the new technology and the public is right in wanting protection against some forms of data-linkage. Without the restraints imposed by law, a recipient of personal information may sell it, transfer it, give it away or leave it carelessly for others to find. In fact, this study revealed that the objection to the use of the social insurance number was most frequently an objection to the absence of restrictions on data-use and data-linkage. The reaction to the number often turned out to be symbolic. The real objection was to having to disclose personal information and to losing control over it. Indeed, many individuals have reported that they desire more control over the use of their personal information and wish to be protected against undisclosed, secondary uses. They are prepared to disclose personal information in return for particularly desirable objectives, but they do not wish the same information to be available freely to others, nor do they want it sold or liable to unauthorized access. Measures are needed in law, both to ensure that personal information given for a particular purpose is not necessarily available for other purposes, and to forbid unauthorized appropriation of personal information.

"THEFT" OF DATA

Although, as previously discussed, there is restraint on or protection from disclosure by way of statutes, and by privilege or custom, generally speaking, personal data does not constitute "property" and cannot be "stolen". The act of using another person's data without consent is not theft at common law.This is largely because data are intangibles and when they are subject to unauthorized access, there is no dispossession on the part of the owner and no corresponding acquisition by the person with access to the data. In addition, the concept of theft is difficult to apply to personal data because the same data may be available from other sources and, furthermore, the appropriation, which may leave no trace, is difficult to prove. The Canadian Criminal Code does not at this time contain an offence of theft of information; besides, theft may not be a workable concept in regard to offences relating to data.

OFFENCE AGAINST THE PRIVACY OF ANOTHER

A new provision in the Criminal Code to prohibit some transactions in respect of personal data is recommended for the foregoing reasons. This enactment should require recipients or collectors of personal data, including the social insurance number, to disclose to the person providing the data all proposed uses of the data not already explicitly provided for or made compulsory by law. The disclosure should be at the time of collection, and consent to new uses would be necessary. The offence might be called an offence against the privacy of another. It should prohibit the wilful undisclosed acquisition, alteration, use, processing, manipulation, transmission or destruction of personal data, not otherwise authorized by law, where the personal data are:

a) provided to obtain a benefit or service,

b) provided under compulsion of law, or

c) placed in the custody of another for storage and the exclusive use of the depositor,

and where it is expressly or implicitly understood that the data will be kept confidential. The definition of personal data could be similar to that employed in the proposed Privacy Act (Part 2 of Bill C-43). The essential ingredients necessary to prove the suggested offence against the privacy of another would be: the identity of the accused, the provision of the data by the subject, the nature of the transaction (that is, the acquisition, alteration, use, processing, manipulation, transmission, or destruction of the data), the absence of disclosure, consent or authority in law, and finally that the transaction was the wilful act of the accused.

To deal with personal data collected from individuals before the enactment of any offence, it would be necessary to provide that uses not consistent with those implicit in the original purpose for which the data had been provided, be against the law as of the date of enactment of the offence. In other words, consent to uses, not consistent with the original purpose, would have to be obtained from the subject of the information.

Useful parallel concepts do exist, in copyright laws which protect original works, in patent laws which protect proprietary rights in inventions and in the Criminal Code which creates the offence of theft of some intangibles, such as of telecommunications time. The proof of the civil wrong or the offence under those laws is difficult, but not impossible. Proof of the offence which is proposed here may be as difficult. However, difficulty of proof does not necessarily mean that an offence cannot be properly defined or successfully prosecuted.

ADVANTAGES OF PROPOSAL

There would be several advantages in creating the offence proposed in the previous section. It would protect against undisclosed use or modification of personal information provided by the individual concerned, it should generate awareness of the need to protect individual privacy and should result in the taking of new preventive measures to protect against the commission of the prohibited acts.

The proposed offence should operate to prohibit data-linkage by persons, corporations and governments, except when the data-linkage is provided for elsewhere in law, is implicit in the original purpose for which the information was collected, or when the individual concerned consents. Such an offence would provide protection against the harm which members of the public perceive as arising from the use of the social insurance number as a data-linkage device. But it would also make other inappropriate or undesirable data-linkage illegal, regardless of device used.

In all cases of voluntary provision of personal data, individuals would be able to inform themselves and weigh the consequences of giving personal information in return for benefits and services, and they would be protected against secret use and modification of personal data. While no secret modification of data was uncovered by this study, secret and malicious modification of, for instance, a person's credit record could have serious consequences for that individual. Because of the new technology, it is as easy to modify information as it is to appropriate it, but the modification might cause more harm than the simple taking of the data.

The offence should deter people whether they collect personal data, are employees of the collector, are faced with a casual or accidental opportunity to misuse personal data or are engaged in espionage. The severity of the sanctions for offenders would, of course, vary with the motive of the person who breaks the law. Presumably, the courts would deal with youthful pranksters in a manner analogous to the way they deal with those who engage in "joy-riding", and with deliberate intruders who acquire, sell or use personal data without authority, in the way they deal with people who commit other serious offences against persons or property. Because the possible motives for and the consequences of misuse of data may vary greatly, it will probably be necessary to provide for prosecution both by way of summary proceedings and by indictment.

To prohibit behaviour does not automatically cause it to disappear, and the enactment of the suggested offence would not solve all problems related to the use of the social insurance number or of other personal data. It should increase public awareness of the entitlement of others to some information privacy and, if the Criminal Code were to provide penalties for certain uses of data, preventive security measures will probably be taken by those who collect, store or use personal data. If there were sanctions in the Criminal Code, it is also possible that the courts would find negligence under common law, or faute under civil law, if reasonable measures were not taken to prevent the commission of a crime.

It is, of course, also possible that those who collect personal data may insist on release clauses to protect against being charged with such an offence. If individuals choose to provide information in spite of an all-inclusive release clause, the protection would still apply in respect of dishonest acts of persons other than the beneficiary of the release, but a strong consumer lobby would be necessary to ensure a proper balance between private and organizational rights.

The proposal for an offence against the privacy of another has some additional advantages in that it would, if enacted, apply to both the public and private sectors and to both provincial and federal spheres of authority. It does not interfere with provincial laws, such as, for example, those protecting

credit information. If necessary, governments would still be able to establish data commissions to control or protect data and licence collectors of personal data within their respective jurisdictions. In addition, the creation of a criminal offence would employ an established mechanism for enforcement; no new legislation or regulations are required to establish procedures and no new bureaucracy appears necessary. Finally, barring unforeseen new inventions, the offence would still be a workable concept in a cash-less, paper-less society, where individuals carry their own data on their so-called smart card.

EXPORT OF DATA

Some members of the public have alerted us to their concern over personal data being stored outside Canada. It might be appropriate to include with the proposed offence a provision to the effect that to export or to cause the export of personal information from Canada would require express consent, i.e.: unless an individual has specifically agreed, or unless export is otherwise authorized by law, it would be an offence, regardless of where initiated, to transmit or have transmitted his or her personal data to another country. In this area the law should establish whether transmission through networks outside Canada would amount to export of data.

PROHIBITION OF DISCLOSURE AND "THEFT" OF DATA IN GENERAL

While this subject is somewhat beyond the terms of reference, it should be noted that the proposed offence could be extended to expressly prohibit the disclosure of certain personal information. One example would be information about convictions for which an individual has received a pardon. Under the Criminal Records Act, a pardon is actually a certificate to the effect that the past criminal history of an individual shall not reflect adversely on him or her. The provisions in the Criminal Records Act prevent disclosure of the judicial record but do not cover information about the conviction held elsewhere. A provision in the Criminal Code could prevent others, for instance provincial police forces, the media or credit grantors, from making use of or disclosing the information about convictions for which the individual holds a pardon.

It would, of course, also be a logical extension of data protection legislation to deal with "theft" of data in general, as distinct from personal data, provided by an individual.

SUMMARY

Many individuals who object to the increasing use of the social insurance number are in reality concerned with the question of data-linkage. They think that undisclosed, secondary uses of personal data should be prohibited in certain circumstances. Their concerns should be met by incorporation of an offence against the privacy of another into the Canadian Criminal Code to prohibit dishonest dealings with personal data where the data have been provided to obtain a benefit or service, under compulsion of law, or have been placed for private use in the custody of another.

The proposal for a new criminal offence does not address the problem of whether the use of the social insurance number should be limited or regulated for reasons not connected with data-linkage, nor does it deal with the possible dangers inherent in the accumulation of a large number of personal data in centralized computer facilities. Both issues have been addressed in the briefs and letters addressed to this study, and they will be dealt with next.

PART IV

CONCERNS ABOUT PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS

4.1 OBJECTIONS TO THE USE OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER NOT DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO DATA LINKAGE

INTRODUCTION

The proposal for a new criminal offence does not address the problem of whether the use of the social insurance number should be limited or regulated for reasons not connected with data-linkage.

This study has demonstrated that the primary concern of the Canadian public is with data-linkage rather than with the use of the social insurance number itself. However, there are reasons, other than fear of improper data-linkage, why people object to the social insurance number. The main ones are that the use of the number is impersonal, evokes memories of prejudice or mass brutality, or violates religious beliefs. Also, there is the contention that in permitting widespread use of the number, the Federal Government broke a commitment made when the social insurance number was first introduced in Canada. Finally, there is the concern that special measures should be taken to ensure the privacy of information in times of crisis.

THE DEHUMANIZING EFFECT OF NUMBERS

It is important to avoid being mistaken for someone with a bad reputation but many people feel depersonalized when they are identified by a number, and some feel that to be known by anything but a name is degrading. As well, a large number of individuals consider the request for a number particularly offensive where children are involved.

Some individuals find the use of a numbering system particularly objectionable when the number is issued by the federal government, because of a fear that unauthorized or undisclosed data linkage by authorities may represent a threat to privacy and, ultimately, to the liberty of individuals.

In northern parts of Canada a certain resentment was apparent when this study was reminded of the former practice of issuing discs to identify the

original inhabitants because administrators could not master the individual native names.

Some individuals see no objection to the use of different numbers for different purposes and suggest that the protection of privacy lies in having a unique numbering key to the system for each separate purpose.

It is clear that most individuals feel a strong need for privacy and freedom from government interference in their lives. It is also clear that many would like to have a universally acceptable method of identification for use of the individual at his or her option. But it is believed that few Canadians would accept general registration of all members of society by address, social insurance number or any other identifier. There is general support in Canada for the views of the Task Force on Privacy and Computers (Department of Communications/Department of Justice, 1972) that no universal identifying number should be adopted without a full public debate.

PREJUDICE OR MASS BRUTALITY

Canada has a large proportion of immigrants who came to this country to improve their lives, and to gain freedom from past injustices or from government interference.

Discussions with immigrants, some of whom have been in Canada for many years, indicate that they are apprehensive of the widespread use of the social insurance number or any other identifying number. State issued numbers are perceived not only as symbols of oppression but also as the means by which oppression is achieved. This reaction is particularly strong among those who remember the Second World War.

In the relative security of the North American continent, few people believe that intolerance or persecution on the grounds of race, religion or political beliefs could occur on a mass scale or by official policy. Few Canadians who were born in this country have experienced the knock on the door at dawn followed by the abduction and disappearance of a loved one. Few Canadians carry tattooed numbers on their bodies but those who do will never feel completely secure. For some, a state-issued number is a reminder of brutality that was sanctioned by a state, of terrorism, or of occupation by a foreign power.

RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS

Some individuals have indicated that the use of a social insurance number offends their religious beliefs. The Old Order Mennonites and Amish groups seek exemption from using the number on this basis. They do not choose to receive certain social benefits enjoyed by other members of society but instead provide care within their groups. The use of the number is seen by them as acquiescence in participation in social programs of the state.

Most Canadians would probably accept that religious freedom includes the right to refuse financial benefits and on this ground individuals should not be required to obtain a social insurance number. Indeed it should not be necessary for the individuals to give reasons for wanting to opt out, where the individuals prefer to refuse benefits enjoyed by others in society or wish to pay for the cost of special processing in order to be exempted from the requirement to use a social insurance number.

Revenue Canada, in fact, has already entered into an exclusive arrangement with Old Order Mennonites and Amish Groups in 1979 with respect to the use of social insurance numbers on income tax returns. The arrangement allows members of the religious sects who do not have social insurance numbers to be assigned special numbers which commence with a zero and which are not coded but are issued in sequence, solely for income tax purposes.

FAILURE ON THE PART OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO REGULATE THE USE OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

A large proportion of those who objected to the use of the social insurance number thought they had been deceived by the federal government. Many individuals referred to Prime Minister Pearson's solemn promise to the nation that the number would never become a national identity number. As found by historian David H. Flaherty, it is debatable whether a specific promise was made to the nation. A full discussion of ministerial promises is provided in a paper titled "The Origins and Development of Social Insurance Numbers in Canada" prepared by Professor Flaherty for this study and published separately. In the paper, Professor Flaherty, inter alia, analyses the various promises and statements made by politicians

relating to the social insurance number. The statement to which people most often refer is reported on page 27 of Professor Flaherty's paper and refers to a discussion which took place on 8 April, 1964 in the House of Commons between the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker, then Leader of the Opposition and the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, then Prime Minister. In response to a suggestion made by Mr. Diefenbaker that the social insurance number might be used for income tax purposes, Mr. Pearson interjected, "Certainly not." Professor Flaherty concludes on page 118 that "the 'Certainly not' blurted out by Prime Minister Pearson in response to oral questioning by John Diefenbaker ... has none of the persuasiveness of a formal undertaking made in the House of Commons by a Minister of the Crown. A formal undertaking would normally have to be a clearly-prepared statement laying out policy in response to a stated question." Nevertheless, there is a widespread feeling that the federal government is guilty of breach of faith and that the number became a universal identifier because of the government's inaction.

It is the opinion of the writer that the moment for forbidding the use of the number for anything but the original purposes for which it was introduced has passed. It serves no purpose now to debate whether the government failed to regulate the use of the number by default or design and, as discussed elsewhere in this report, to prohibit or limit the use of the number would not protect individuals against inappropriate uses or data-linkage.

EMERGENCY MEASURES TO PROTECT PRIVACY

As discussed earlier, personal information is kept secure and confidential by limiting access to information systems and avoiding some linkage. Many people believe that to have a total dossier on an individual in the hands of government, no matter how benevolent, constitutes a threat to privacy and liberty. The more concentrated the information system is, the greater the threat will be to individual privacy and liberty. Further, if a total dossier on any individual falls into the hands of an unsrupulous, malevolent or avaricious party, the information could be used to do physical, mental or financial harm to the individual. The proposal for the offence contained in this report is *inter alia* aimed at promoting full public knowledge and assessment of governmental use of

data-linkage and it is hoped that any practices that are not acceptable to the population at large will be abolished through the democratic process.

In times of peace and freedom from natural disasters, the laws and customs of a country may offer sufficient protection, but that protection is not adequate in times of upheaval or catastrophy. This issue has been examined in a study conducted by the Swedish "Sarbarhetskommittén", whose report was published in June, 1978. The report deals with the computerized society's vulnerability to crime, misuse of data for political purposes, espionage, war, sabotage, occupation and natural disasters. It also discusses the increase in vulnerability that arises from the concentration and computerization of data.

To the best of our knowledge, no such study has been conducted in Canada and no contingency plans are in place to protect personal information in case of man-made or natural disasters. Our work has convinced us of the need for a Canadian study of those issues.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reasons given for objecting to the use of identifying numbers in general, and of social insurance numbers in particular, are not always directly related or attributable to the objection to various forms of data-linkage. The objections based on the dehumanizing effect of numbers, memories of past horrors, religious beliefs or fear of totalitarianism are made in good faith. It is believed that only a small proportion of Canadians object to the use of the social insurance number on these grounds. Whenever possible, however, the wishes of individuals who hold those views should be respected.

It is therefore recommended that:

- the government of Canada, its institutions and agencies, make it possible for an individual, on application, to be exempted from being identified by a social insurance or other number in federal information systems, and
- when such individualized processing of personal information imposes a significant increase in cost, the individual concerned be charged a reasonable fee.

It is not possible to determine in advance the numberof individuals who would take advantage of an opportunity to opt out of a system of identification by number; therefore the disruption to records systems and the costs of this recommendation cannot be predicted. An example of the number or percentage of individuals who may take advantage of opting out of a requirement to use the social insurance number was reported by Humber College. As stated earlier in this report, one per cent. of the student body chose a number other than the social insurance number when given the right to do so.

In the area of protection of personal information in times of crisis, it is recommended that:

- the federal government study the need for contingency plans to ensure the protection of information banks containing personal data during periods of man-made or natural disasters.

4.2 IDENTIFYING NUMBERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

A general description of data protection laws in other jurisdictions is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is worthwhile to refer to the use of identifying numbers in other countries.

In many other jurisdictions people are required to register their names and addresses with state authorities. Some countries have used personal identity cards in times of war and peace, and some began issuing official identity cards before the development of the computer. The realization of the capacity of computers precipitated the debate on privacy in those countries as it did in Canada. Some countries now have data protection authorities and data protection laws.

The annual meeting of International Data Commissioners in Ottawa in September, 1980 presented an opportunity to gain insight into the use of identifying numbers for individuals in other countries. Excerpts from the discussion follow.

SWEDEN

Jan Freese, the Director of the Swedish Data Commission, indicates that numbers have been used to identify individuals in Sweden since 1947, that is, before information was stored by means of computers. The Swedish identity number consists of the date of birth combined with a birth number. The birth number is odd for men and even for women. Mr. Freese explains the system as follows:

Year of birth	Month of birth	Day of birth	Birth number
33	10	28	049

A tenth digit, the check digit, is added. It is obtained by multiplying the digits in the above example by 2 and 1 alternately.

33	10	28	049
21	21	21	212
63	20	48	0418

The sum of the digits thus obtained comes to 6+3+2+0+4+8+0+4+1+8=36. This result is subtracted from the next highest multiple of 10. In this case the result is 40-36=4. The check digit is thus 4, and it can be used in reverse to control that the identity number 331028-0494 is correctly given. The identity number is used in most person registers in Sweden and facilitates integration.

In 1973, Sweden introduced its Data Act and established its Data Inspection Board. The Data Inspection Board is an independent agency of the government and it functions as an administrative tribunal. The Board monitors compliance with the Data Act and licenses any organization, both public and private, involved in the collection of personal data. Anyone who collects and maintains records of personal information must obtain permission from the Data Inspection Board. The Board may impose conditions on what is collected, how it is stored and disseminated.

Mr. Freese is aware of the risks involved in the linking of personal information registers by identity numbers but thinks that benefits from the use of those numbers outweigh the disadvantages. His view is that the Data Inspection Board operates as a sufficient check against misuse of personal information.

DENMARK

In Denmark, a personal identity number (PIN) was introduced in 1968. Mr. Jorgen Paulsen, the Director of the Danish Data Surveillance Authority, indicates that there was no controversy in Parliament or in the press at the time of the introduction of the number and that the question of any threat to privacy did not arise until 1970 when a Commission was set up to study privacy and computers.

Mr. Paulsen reports that the Danish Register of persons contains information about six million persons who reside permanently in Denmark. The information in the registry is primarily: the PIN, the full name, the address, marital status, place of birth, occupation, and the PINs of the individual's parents and children. The registry furnishes the data to agencies involved in the administration and enforcement of taxes and duties, contributions towards welfare schemes, pensions, unemployment insurance, prosecution

and prevention of crime, health and hospital services. The personal register is also used for statistical and scientific purposes. The private sector has access to the personal register for purposes of making enquiries concerning individuals, but the number itself is only provided to the private sector for purposes of the administration of taxes. Employers are entitled to receive an employee's PIN, name and address and income tax rate from the tax authorities. Financial institutions, such as banks, are required to report individual income from securities to the tax authorities and they are therefore able to get the PIN, name and address of its customers. The private sector may use the PIN when obtained from the individual.

Mr. Paulsen highlights the danger in linking different pieces of information about individuals and suggests that more information about an individual than is necessary may be collected. As in Sweden, the Data Surveillance Authority has a mandate to ensure that unnecessary information is not stored. Furthermore, linkage of registers created for different purposes must be approved by the Minister responsible and the Minister is required to hear the Data Protection Board before authority is granted.

Mr. Paulsen stresses that the use of the PIN assists in the accurate identification of individuals. The use of the number sometimes obviates the necessity of names and addresses and thus identifying individuals when information is given to third parties who do not need to know the identity of the subjects. Mr. Paulsen also points out that the PIN assists in providing speedy medical treatment and more precise planning of scientific investigations.

Finally, Mr. Paulsen points out the risk to individuals in the event of war or occupation by foreign powers. He states that it is easier to take over the administration of a country when you have access to the personal information registers. It is also easier to find individuals or groups in order to persecute them. The Danish Act provides for destruction of some information in the event of war or war-like circumstances.

NORWAY

Mr. Seip, the Director General of the Norwegian Data Inspectorate, emphasizes the need for discussion of the use of the personal number and

indicated that in Norway, the scientific community has objected to restrictions on the use of the number. He points out that the Norwegian Data Inspectorate has authority to regulate the use of the national registration number. Mr. Seip would like to see specific legislation dealing with the use of the national number but accepts that it is only a tool for data-linkage. He thinks its use should not be unnecessarily restricted and admits that data-linkage is fully possible without the use of the number.

GERMANY

Dr. Hans Bull, the Federal Commissioner for Data Protection in Germany, reports that the use of a personal identity number is considered non-constitutional in that country. He states that no universal numbering of persons exists in Germany. He points to the capacity for linkage by means of other identifiers and refers to the innovation of the machine readable card which can contain all necessary personal information about an individual. He told the delegates that these cards were eventually planned for use in all of Europe and reports that he has been successful in limiting their use in Germany to criminal investigations; border checks, but not the recording of passage through a border; for entrance control on premises, but not for recording the fact of a person having entered. Dr. Bull's attitudes are based on the premise that if information is stored, someone will use it eventually.

FRANCE

The computer readable personal information card described by Dr. Bull was also referred to by Me Louis Joinet, Director of the French National Council on Informatics and Freedoms. The card was introduced in France in 1979 and is intended to be used by the individual for life. The laws in France do not forbid the use of a personal identity number and Me Joinet recognizes some advantages in the use of numbers. He foresees the adoption of an international personal information card for all persons and states that French law provides that a number be assigned to the card, not the individual. This would mean that if the card is lost, a new card with a new number is issued. In France, therefore, the number is not legal proof of a person's identity. Me Joinet suggests that the telephone number of an individual could serve as a card number.

LUXEMBOURG

Mr. Edmond Toussing, Director of the National Center for Informatics in Luxembourg, reports that his country uses a national identifying number for all fiscal, government transactions, to facilitate general transfer of records and for administrative purposes. A proposed law would protect information privacy by placing some restrictions on the use of the identifying number but it would allow uses similar to those permitted in Denmark.

Mr. Toussing favours legislation that clearly spells out when the number may be used and when its use is prohibited. He indicates that there has been only limited debate about the issues in the press in his country. He believes a person number to be useful, that we cannot escape its use, but that the real danger lies in data-linkage.

SUMMARY

As the above comments indicate, Europeans have had to face the issue of whether to use a personal identity number. The introduction of the number in Europe occurred in societies that have accepted the public and compulsory registration of names and addresses of people. Registration of people was accepted as a matter of course in the past and only the advent of computers and data-linkage precipitated a debate on the issue of privacy.

The consensus among the Data Commissioners was that the number itself may not be the real issue and that attention should be focused on the protection of privacy by limiting the use of personal information, not just preventing the use of a personal number.

4.3 THE NEED FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The contributions to the study received from many individuals indicate that they do not appreciate that they have the right, in many instances, to say no to requests for their social insurance number. Nor is it apparent that they know that they may have the right to refuse to provide other personal data. Even when they know their rights, many individuals feel uncomfortable or reluctant about going through the inevitable difficulties or arguments which arise when they resist giving their social insurance number.

An information brochure issued by Employment and Immigration Canada warns recipients of social insurance number cards:

> Be cautious about giving your number to anyone. As with any other personal information give it only for reasons you think proper.

Because this warning has not been noticed and because of the changes computer technology has caused to information practices, it is recommended that the federal government assume responsibility for informing members of the public of their rights to informational privacy and of the need for individuals to assume part of the responsibility for not releasing personal data arbitrarily.

In particular, such a program should support a person'sindividual resolve to make specific decisions as to the cost-benefit ratio between giving or not giving the social insurance number or any other personal data. Individuals should be encouraged to be assertive enough to ask anyone who requires personal data from them why the information is required, with whom it will be shared, for how long it will be stored and what provisions will be taken to ensure that the information is kept confidential, secure and accurate.

PART V

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The study into the social insurance number led to the conclusion that the number is used extensively in Canada by the various levels of government and by the private sector. It is used primarily as a means of identifying individuals, and also as a tool for data-linkage, particularly in the administration of government assistance programs. However, if the use of the social insurance number were prohibited or limited to certain programs, data-linkage could still occur using other identifiers. As a result, no recommendation is made to limit the use of the social insurance number.

The privacy of individuals may be threatened by improper data-linkage and it is therefore recommended that:

1) an offence be included in the Canadian Criminal Code to prohibit dishonest dealings with personal data, where the data have been provided to obtain a benefit or service, under compulsion of law, or have been placed for private use in the custody of another.

Because some individuals have valid reasons for objecting to uses of the social insurance number not related to data-linkage, it is also recommended that:

2) the government of Canada, its institutions and agencies, make it possible for an individual, on application, to be exempted from being identified by a social insurance or other number in federal information systems, and, when such individualized processing of personal information imposes a significant increase in cost, the individual concerned be charged a reasonable fee.

Finally, it is recommended that:

3) the federal government study the need for contingency plans to ensure the protection of information banks containing personal data during periods of man-made or natural disasters, and

4) the federal government assume responsibility for informing members of the public of their rights to informational privacy and of the need for individuals to assume part of the responsibility for not releasing personal data arbitrarily.

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PRIVACY CONMMISSION'S STUDY OF THE USE OF THE SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

1. The Minister of Justice has requested the Privacy Commissioner, and the Privacy Commissioner has agreed, to conduct a study with respect to the use of the Social Insurance Number, and the implications of such use for the privacy of individuals, by:

   (a) corporations, organizations and other bodies in the private sector which come within the legislative authority of Parliament; and

   (b) institutions in the public sector which come within the legislative authority of Parliament.

2. In consultation with provincial governments, the Privacy Commissioner is also to study the use of the Social Insurance Number by provincial and municipal governments and the implications of such use for the privacy of individuals.

3. The Privacy Commissioner in conducting this study is authorized to receive and consider submissions and comments from any source with respect to the use of the Social Insurance Number and the relationship of such use to privacy.

4. The study by the Privacy Commissioner is to examine the following matters:

   (a) the extent to which the Social Insurance Number is collected and used by those corporations organizations, institutions, governments and other bodies which are within the scope of this study;

   (b) the purposes for which the Social Insurance Number is used;

   (c) whether or not the Social Insurance Number is used as a data-linkage device and, if so, the extent and implications of such use;

(d) whether or not the collection and use of the Social Insurance Number represents a threat to the privacy of individuals and, if so, the nature and extent of this threat;

(e) the possible implications of the regulation or prohibition of the collection or use of the Social Insurance Number.

5. The Privacy Commissioner is to advise and make recommendations with respect to the above and in particular is:

(a) to advise and make recommendations with respect to whether or not the collection and use of the Social Insurance Number should be regulated or prohibited;

(b) if so, to advise and make recommendations with respect to the manner in which this should be done, and

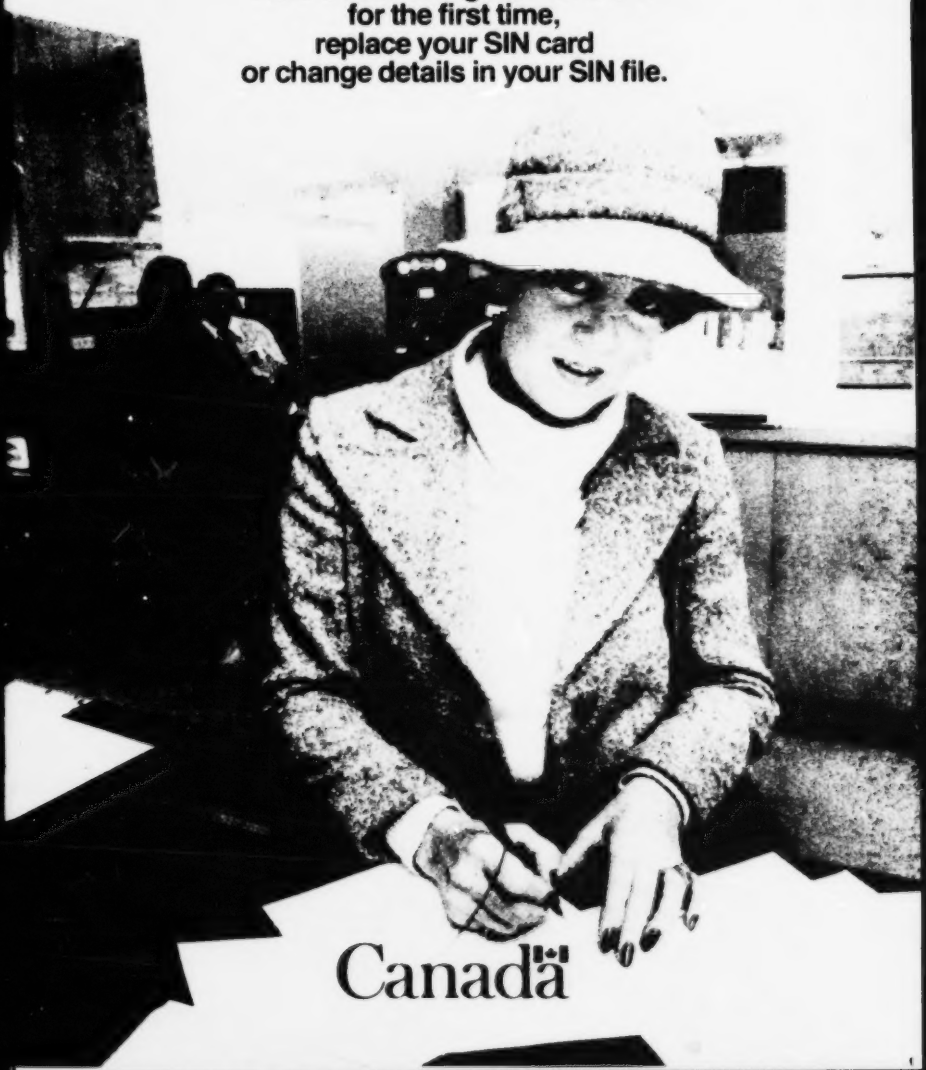
(c) to advise and make recommendations with respect to any other matter relating to the collection and use of the Social Insurance Number and the consequential implications for the privacy of individuals.

6. The Privacy Commissioner shall submit her report on the use of the Social Insurance Number to the Minister of Justice.

Employment and Immigration Canada
Emploi et Immigration Canada

How to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) by mail

Here's how to register for a SIN for the first time, replace your SIN card or change details in your SIN file.



Canada

Apply by mail only if you can't apply at your local office.

This guide is intended for applicants who find they must apply *by mail* because they cannot apply in person at a local Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services).

If you *can* apply in person, you should because the local office can help you apply correctly. In that way, you avoid delay if the application is returned for correction.

But remember that we cannot be responsible for the safety of any documents sent through the mail, though every reasonable effort will be made to ensure their safe return.

What's inside

Part I **Page 4**

How do I apply for a Social Insurance Number if I've never had one?

Part II **Page 6**

What do I do if the name on my birth certificate (or other primary identity document) is different from the name I now use?

How do I apply if I want to replace my SIN card?

Who do I contact if I need more help?

Part III **Page 8**

What identification documents do I send with my SIN application?

How do I complete the application?

Where can I get birth, citizenship or immigration records?

Part I

How do I apply for a Social Insurance Number if I've never had one?

You should fill out the correct application form, get the correct documents proving your identity, and mail both using the envelopes provided.

Filling in your forms

Use one of these two forms:

1. *Application for a Social Insurance Number or replacement of a Social Insurance Number card.* This form comes with the application kit. Complete it if you're applying for the first time or if you've lost, misplaced or damaged your SIN card.
2. *Amendment of Social Insurance Records.* Get this form at your nearest Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services). Complete it if you want to change information in your SIN file — for example, the name in which you are registered.

If you need help completing either form, see the instructions in Part III of the guide (page 12 or 14).

Getting your identity documents

The SIN is a key part of the administration of several government income support programs and of the income tax system. Before you can get a SIN, your identity and citizenship status must be clearly established. That is why you should send two identification documents: a primary document and a secondary document.

1. *The primary document* — it proves your identity and citizenship status in Canada. It must be an original document or a copy certified by a notary public (or another person authorized to take oaths). Both sides of the document must be copied and certified if they have relevant information.

The kind of primary document you must send depends on your status in Canada. Different kinds of primary documents are required from Canadian citizens, from permanent residents (landed immigrants) and from those who are in neither group. Choose one from the list of primary documents in Part III of this guide (page 8).

Note:

The name you now use may be different from the name on your primary document. If so, see part II for more details, (page 6).

2. *The secondary document* — It supports the information on your primary document. Here, photocopies are acceptable.

There are many kinds of acceptable secondary documents. Choose one from the list in Part III of this guide (page 10).

Mailing your form and documents

Here's how to prepare your application for mailing.

1. Select the envelope with "2" in the lower left-hand corner.
2. *Print* your name, complete address and postal code in the space provided. This is the envelope in which we will return your primary and secondary documents. We will pay first class postage when returning your documents. But if you send valuable original documents and wish them returned by registered mail, you must put sufficient postage on this envelope to cover the cost of registration.
3. Put in envelope "2":
   - the completed application form

Send two identity documents with your application.

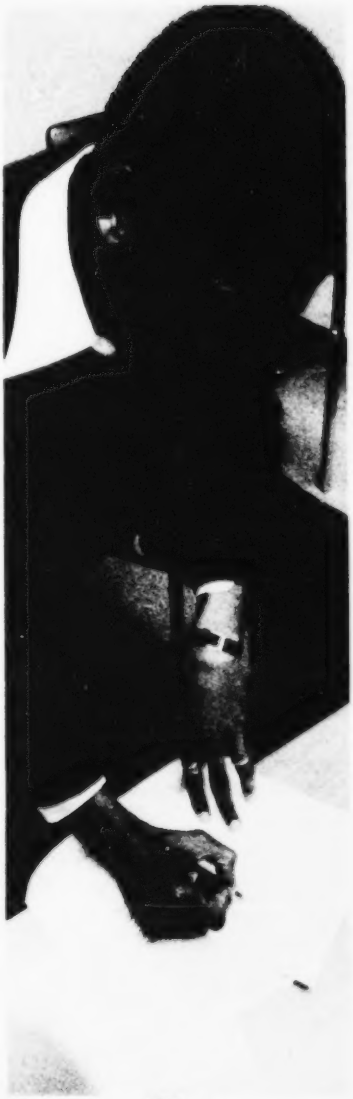
- the primary document
- the secondary document or the other supporting document (such as a marriage certificate, if necessary).

4. Put envelope "2" (unsealed) inside envelope "1".
5. Seal envelope "1" and affix sufficient postage. It would be wise to use registered mail when sending valuable original documents.

Note:

If your documents are too big to fit in envelope "2", use your own envelopes instead of the ones supplied. In this case, be sure to mark your address on the return envelope.

If you do not have any problems in applying in the normal way just described, you do not have to read Part II.



Fill out the correct application form.

Part II

What do I do if the name on my birth certificate (or other primary identity document) is different from the name I now use?

In this case, you apply as described in Part I above. However, the secondary document(s) you send must support the difference in names. *Don't send any other kind of secondary document.*

Do this also if you want to change the name now on your SIN card.

Send an *original or certified photocopy* of one of these documents:

1. Name changed by marriage

- Canadian marriage certificate
- foreign marriage certificate (if in a language other than English or French, it must be accompanied by an English or French translation).

2. Name changed by law

- certificate made under a provincial Change of Name Act
- court order made under a provincial Change of Name Act
- certificate or court order made under similar legislation.

3. Name changed by use

This happens when the name you now use is different from the one on your primary document *but* has been accepted by your community for a long time. In this case, you should write or phone your nearest Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services). Ask them to send you a statutory declaration form.

After you complete it, have it certified by a person legally authorized to take oaths, for example, a lawyer, notary public or commissioner for oaths.

Then mail us this certified form with your application and other documents.

How do I apply if I want to replace my SIN card?

Apply the same way as you would for your first SIN card. See part I.

Who do I contact if I need more help?

If you cannot get a suitable primary, secondary or other document, first contact your local Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services).

If you are getting Old Age Security but cannot get a primary document, contact the nearest regional Old Age Security office of Health and Welfare Canada. Ask them for a "status declaration".

If you still need help, write to the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, Central Index Division at the return address shown on envelope "2".

Officers of the Commission are ready to help you. But first you should make every reasonable effort to get the required documents.

Changed your name? Send an identity document to prove it.

The primary document must be an original or a certified copy.

Usually, the secondary document can be a photocopy.

Part III

What identification documents do I send with my application?

Here are lists of primary documents (originals or certified copies only) you need . . .

1) if you are a Canadian citizen

A Canadian citizen is a person who was born in Canada or who has a certificate of citizenship or naturalization.

You need *one* of these:

- Certificate of Birth (issued by the vital statistics branch of the province or territory of your birth or by a government agency authorized by federal or provincial law to register births)
- Certificate of Baptism (Quebec and Newfoundland only)
- Certificate of Dedication (Newfoundland only)
- Certificate of Canadian Citizenship
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Certificate of Indian Status
- Certificate of Registration of Birth Abroad
- Certificate of Retention of Canadian Citizenship
- An unexpired Canadian passport (Your name on the application must match the one on the passport. If the names are different, the difference must be explained on the observation page of the passport.)

2) if you are a permanent resident (landed immigrant)

A permanent resident (landed immigrant) is someone who has been lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence, but is not yet a naturalized Canadian.

You need *one* of these:

- Canadian Immigration Record and Visa (IMM 1000)
- Confirmation of Immigration Records (M&I 483 or IMM 2014-2241)
- Canada Travel Document
- Canadian Certificate of Identity

Note:

You may already have a distinctive SIN beginning with the digit "9". If you recently became a permanent resident (landed immigrant) you may want a regular SIN. If so, write the distinctive SIN you already have in block 9 of the S-1 application form. It will be cancelled, and you will get a regular SIN.

You should also know . . .

- The name a person now uses can differ from that on a primary document listed above. In this case, a marriage certificate or other document is needed to show legal proof for the difference.
- The reverse side of a primary or name-change document must also be copied and certified if it contains identifying information.
- Quebec and Newfoundland statutes give members of the clergy the status of local birth registration officers. Baptismal certificates issued in these provinces can be accepted instead of a birth certificate.
- The secondary document or foreign birth certificate must be in English or French. If in another

3) **if you are neither and . . .**

a) you are applying inside Canada you need *one* of these:

- Visitor Record (IMM 1097)
- Employment Authorization (IMM 1102)
- Student Authorization (IMM 1208)
- Permit to come into or remain in Canada (IMM 1263)
- Extension of Permit (IMM 1264)
- Manifest (IMM 60)
- Dept. of External Affairs Identity Card
- Foreign passport containing courtesy or diplomatic visa stamp
- Foreign birth certificate

b) you are applying outside Canada, send your Certificate of Birth and *one* of the following:

- An original letter from a Canadian government (federal, provincial, or municipal) or other Canadian institution that asked you to apply for a SIN. If you have none of these, a letter from you stating the reason you need a SIN is acceptable.

Note:

The distinctive SIN — If your application is accepted, you will be given a Social Insurance Number beginning with the digit "9".

People who should apply this way are those who have neither citizenship nor permanent resident (landed immigrant) status in Canada and who are:

- *temporarily in Canada and who need a SIN to comply with Canadian legal or institutional requirements; or*
- *living outside Canada but have Canadian income tax liabilities; or*
- *living outside Canada but are involved in business transactions that require SIN registration to comply with provincial and/or non-government requirements.*

language, it must be accompanied by a translation attested to by the translator in the presence of a notary public. A translation certified by an official representative of the country from which the document originated is also acceptable, provided it is attached to the original. If you have difficulty in providing a translation, contact your local office.

Here are lists of secondary documents. Select one from any list below.

Government documents
- Driver's licence
- Immigration records
- Passport
- Municipal assessment notice or tax bill

Employment records
- Employee identification card
- Security pass
- Letters of recommendation
- Record of Employment
- Union membership card
- Membership in a professional organization

Education records
- School attendance records
- Report card
- Diploma
- Certificate or degree

Records of a religious institution
- Communion
- Confirmation
- Other official religious records

Military records
- Identity card
- Discharge papers
- Medical history
- Pay book

Hospital/medical records
- Hospital records bearing the certification of an official of the hospital administration
- Other medical records certified by a medical doctor or a member of a related profession

Personal records
- Deeds, mortgages, and other formal legal documents showing real property dealings in which you have been involved

Insurance records
- Life insurance policies
- Accident and/or hospital insurance coverage certificates
- Personal property insurance policies
- Mortgage insurance policies
- Liability insurance policies

Name change records
See page 6.

You should also know . . .
- The secondary document must have your name, and be an original, or an unaltered and legible photocopy.
- The secondary document or foreign birth certificate must be in English or French. If in another language, it must be accompanied by a translation attested to by the translator in the presence of a notary public. A translation certified by an official representative of the country from which the document originated is also acceptable, provided it is attached to the original. If you have difficulty in providing a translation, contact your local office.

Give your SIN only for reasons you think proper.

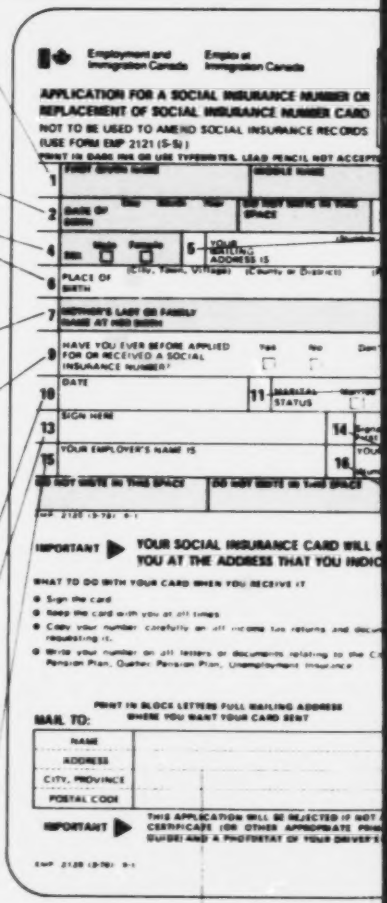
Use registered mail to send valuable original documents.

Your employer will ask for your SIN when you start working.

How do I complete the application form?

This section can help you fill out the two application forms shown on the following pages. Use form (S-1) to apply for a Social Insurance Number if you do not have one, or to replace your Social Insurance Number card. Use form (S-5) to change your social insurance records (for example: to change the name under which you are registered).

1. Print your first (given) name and your present family name (surname) in full. Use only one middle name. Do not print "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Miss" or any other designation.
2. Print the day, month and year of your birth.
4. Check the appropriate block.
6. Print the name of the city, town, or village where you were born, and give the other details asked for (for example, country of birth).
7. This means your mother's maiden name. If you do not know it, print "UNKNOWN".
9. Read item 9 carefully, and remember that it is an offence to apply knowingly for more than one Social Insurance Number. Put an "X" in the appropriate blocks, and if you already have a SIN, print the full nine-digit number here.
10. Print the day, month and year when you complete this application.
13. Your application will be rejected if this block contains a typewritten or hand-printed signature, unless you include a note that the printed signature is your usual signature. Applications made for a person under 12 years of age must be signed by a parent, or guardian, who should state in (14) his/her relationship to the person for whom application is made.
15. If employed when making this application, print the name of the person or firm employing you.


Employment and Immigration Canada / Emploi et Immigration Canada

APPLICATION FOR A SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER OR REPLACEMENT OF SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER CARD

NOT TO BE USED TO AMEND SOCIAL INSURANCE RECORDS (USE FORM EMP 2121 (S-5))

PRINT IN BLOCK (NS OR USE TYPEWRITER. LEAD PENCIL NOT ACCEPTED

1 FIRST GIVEN NAME | MIDDLE NAME

2 DATE OF BIRTH Day Month Year | DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

4 Sex: Male / Female | 5 YOUR MAILING ADDRESS IS

6 PLACE OF BIRTH (City, Town, Village) (County or District)

7 MOTHER'S LAST OR FAMILY NAME AT HER BIRTH

9 HAVE YOU EVER BEFORE APPLIED FOR OR RECEIVED A SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER? Yes / No / Don't

10 DATE | 11 MARITAL STATUS

13 SIGN HERE | 14

15 YOUR EMPLOYER'S NAME IS | 16

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE | DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

EMP 2120 (S-79) 0-1

IMPORTANT ▶ YOUR SOCIAL INSURANCE CARD WILL BE SENT TO YOU AT THE ADDRESS THAT YOU INDICATE

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CARD WHEN YOU RECEIVE IT

- Sign the card
- Keep the card with you at all times
- Copy your number carefully on all income tax returns and documents requesting it.
- Write your number on all letters or documents relating to the Canada Pension Plan, Quebec Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance

PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS FULL MAILING ADDRESS WHERE YOU WANT YOUR CARD SENT

MAIL TO:

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

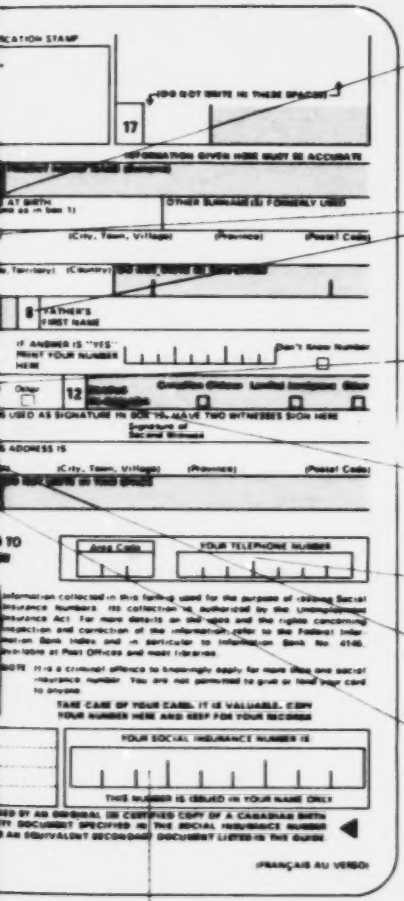
IMPORTANT ▶ THIS APPLICATION WILL BE REJECTED IF NOT ACCOMPANIED BY CERTIFICATE (OR OTHER APPROPRIATE PROOF OF BIRTH) AND A PHOTOSTAT OF YOUR DRIVER'S LICENCE

EMP 2120 (S-79) 0-1

This part of the form will be returned to you with your SIN card. This is the address the postman will actually see in a window envelope. So be sure it is accurate, complete and legible.

Form Emp. 2120 (S-1)

Use this to get or replace a SIN



Leave this space blank until you get your SIN card. Then write your SIN number in this space, for future reference.

3. If your surname now is different from your surname at birth (because of marriage, for example), print your surname at birth. If you have used surnames other than those shown in (1) and (3) print the surname(s) here.
5. Print your current address in full.
8. Print your father's first (given) name. This information helps us to distinguish you from other applicants who have the same name. Print "UNKNOWN" if you do not know his name.
11. Show your marital status by putting an "X" in one of the blocks. A widow, widower, or divorced person would put an "X" in the "OTHER" block.
12. If you are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident (landed immigrant) put an "X" in the appropriate block. Otherwise, put an "X" in the "other" block.

Show your telephone number. It can help us give you better service if we have to contact you.

14. If the signature in (13) is an "X" or other mark made by a person who can't write, the signature of two witnesses must appear here.
16. Print the full mailing address of the employer named in (15).

Form Emp. 2121 (S-5)

Use this to change details on your SIN file

Block "A": Complete all items

A1. Print your family name (surname) as it now appears on your SIN card.

A2. Print your first (given) name as it appears on your SIN card.

A3. Print your middle name, if any, as it appears on your SIN card.

A4.5.6. These blocks should have the same information you gave on your most recent S-1 or S-5 application. It helps to distinguish you from other applicants with the same name.

A4. Print the day, month and year of your birth.

A5. Check the appropriate block.

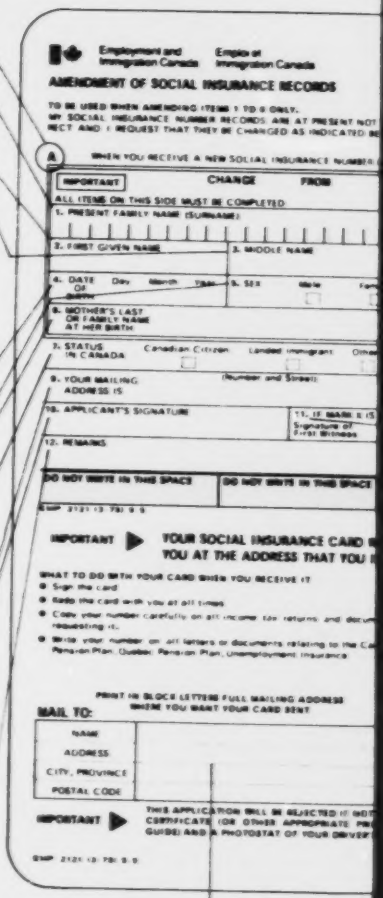
A6. This is your mother's maiden name. If you do not know it, print "UNKNOWN".

7. Canadian citizens or permanent residents (landed immigrants) should put an "X" in the appropriate block. All others should put an "X" in the "other" block.

9. Print your current address in full.

10. Your application will be rejected if this block contains a typewritten or hand-printed signature, unless you include a note that the printed signature is your usual signature. Applications made for a person under 12 years of age must be signed by a parent, or guardian, who should state in (11) his/her relationship to the person for whom application is made.

12. Use this block to show any other information that explains the kind of SIN registration changes you want.


Employment and Immigration Canada
Emploi et Immigration Canada

AMENDMENT OF SOCIAL INSURANCE RECORDS

TO BE USED WHEN AMENDING ITEMS 1 TO 6 ONLY.
MY SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER RECORDS ARE AT PRESENT NOT CORRECT AND I REQUEST THAT THEY BE CHANGED AS INDICATED BE

A

WHEN YOU RECEIVE A NEW SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

IMPORTANT — CHANGE FROM

ALL ITEMS ON THIS SIDE MUST BE COMPLETED

1. PRESENT FAMILY NAME (SURNAME)
2. FIRST GIVEN NAME
3. MIDDLE NAME
4. DATE OF BIRTH — Day, Month, Year
5. SEX — Male, Female
6. MOTHER'S LAST OR FAMILY NAME AT HER BIRTH
7. STATUS IN CANADA — Canadian Citizen, Landed Immigrant, Other
9. YOUR MAILING ADDRESS IS (Number and Street)
10. APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE
11. IF MARK X IS — Signature of First Witness
12. REMARKS

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE | DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

IMPORTANT ▶ YOUR SOCIAL INSURANCE CARD
YOU AT THE ADDRESS THAT YOU

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CARD WHEN YOU RECEIVE IT
- Sign the card
- Keep the card with you at all times
- Copy your number carefully on all income tax returns and
- Show your number on all letters or documents relating to the
Pension Plan, Quebec Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance

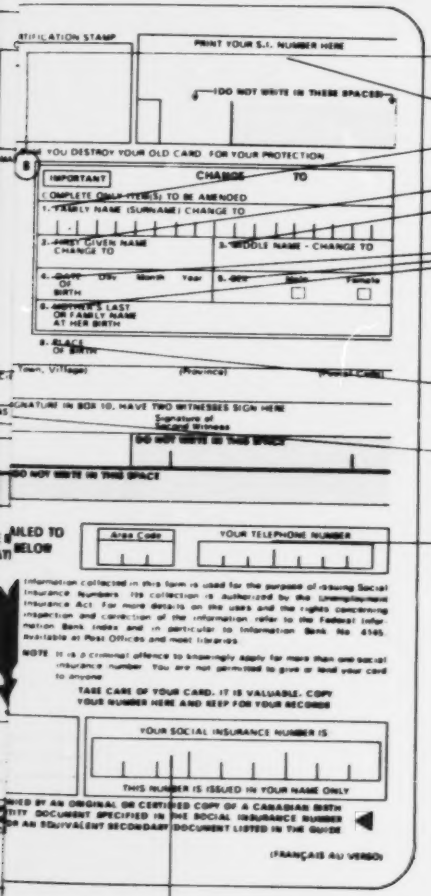
PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS FULL MAILING ADDRESS WHERE YOU WANT YOUR CARD SENT

MAIL TO:

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, PROVINCE
POSTAL CODE

IMPORTANT ▶ THIS APPLICATION WILL BE REJECTED IF NOT
CERTIFICATE (OR OTHER APPROPRIATE
GUIDE) AND A PHOTOSTAT OF YOUR DRIVER'S

This part of the form will be returned to you with your new SIN card. This is the address the postman will actually see, in a window envelope. So be sure it is accurate, complete and legible.



Block "B": Complete only items you want to change

Show here the social insurance number you got when you first registered.

B1. Print your new family name (surname).

B2. Print your new first (given) name.

B3. Print your new middle name. Only one middle name can be recorded.

B4.5.6. Use these blocks to correct information you gave when you applied before. Write the correct information in block "B". Do this only for items that must be changed.

8. Print the name of the city or town, and the country, where you were born.

11. If the signature in (10) is an "X" or other mark by a person who can't write, the signature of two witnesses must appear here.

Show your telepl.one number. It can help us give you better service if we have to contact you.

Leave this space blank until you get your SIN card. Then write your SIN number in this space, for future reference.

Where can I get birth, citizenship and immigration records?

For birth records contact:

Prince Edward Island
Director
Division of Vital Statistics
Department of Health
Box 3000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7P1

Nova Scotia
Deputy Registrar General
Joseph Howe Building
Department of Health
P.O. Box 488
Halifax, N.S.
B3J 2R8

New Brunswick
Personal Health Services Division
Vital Statistics
Department of Health
Centennial Building
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Ontario
Deputy Registrar
Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations
MacDonald Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Y5

Northwest Territories
Registrar of Vital Statistics
Department of Public Works
Government of Northwest Territories
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2L9

Manitoba
Resources Division
Vital Statistics Branch
Department of Health and Social Development
Room 104,
401 York Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Saskatchewan
Research & Planning Division
Department of Health
Provincial Health Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A9

Alberta
Director of Vital Statistics
Department of Social Services and Community Health
10405 - 100 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0A6

British Columbia
Public Health Program
Vital Statistics
Ministry of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

Yukon Territory
Registrar, Vital Statistics
Department of Health
Government of the Yukon Territory
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Y.T.
Y1A 2C6

Quebec
The minister of religion of the parish in which birth was registered
or
The Registry of Superior Court of the judicial district of registration

Newfoundland
The minister of religion of the parish in which birth was registered
or
Registrar
Vital Statistics Division
Department of Health
Confederation Building
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5T7

Be sure to put your address on the return envelope.

For immigration and citizenship records:

Your local Canada Immigration Centre and Court of Canadian Citizenship can help you get immigration and citizenship papers. Their addresses and telephone numbers are in the "Government of Canada" listings of your telephone directory or the directory of a large city near you. Look under "Citizenship inquiries" or "Immigration".

Your rights under the privacy laws

Under the federal privacy laws which came into effect on March 1, 1978, you have access to your Social Insurance Number file.

For more information about how to see and make corrections to your file, consult the Index of Federal Information Banks, available at most post offices. Refer to bank number 4145.

We are authorized by the Unemployment Insurance Act to ask for the information you give on your SIN application. This information is used to issue your SIN. It may also be used for other purposes. These other uses are described in the federal information bank index.

We're working together

Some Canada Manpower Centres and Unemployment Insurance offices have become single offices. They are called Canada Employment Centres. Eventually, everyone will find their Canada Manpower Centre and Unemployment Insurance office together in one place. Meanwhile, you will see signs reading Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance) or Canada Employment Centre (Manpower Services).

WARNING

This brochure contains general information only. When a question arises, the Unemployment Insurance Act and Regulations must govern.

It is an offence to apply knowingly for more than one Social Insurance Number.

Employment and Immigration Canada
Emploi et Immigration Canada

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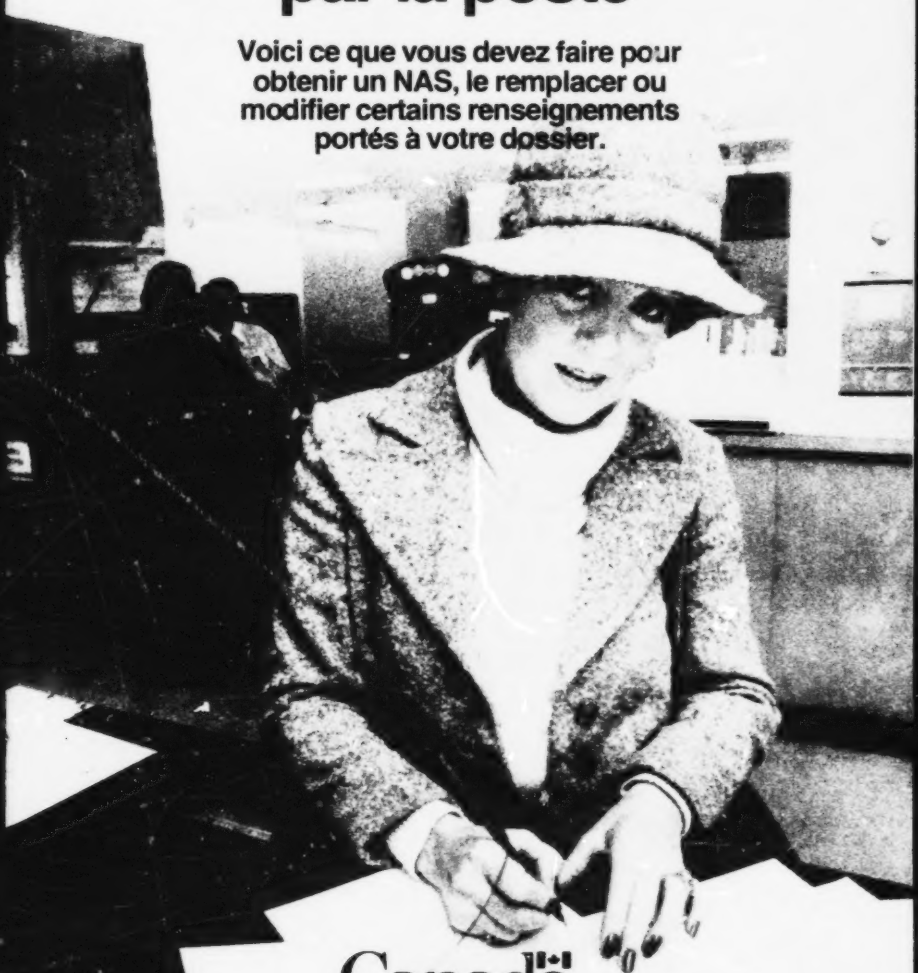
Emploi et Immigration Canada

Employment and Immigration Canada

Comment demander un numéro d'assurance sociale (NAS) par la poste

Voici ce que vous devez faire pour obtenir un NAS, le remplacer ou modifier certains renseignements portés à votre dossier.



Canada

Postez votre demande seulement si vous ne pouvez aller au bureau local

Ce guide a été conçu pour les personnes qui sont obligées d'envoyer leur formulaire de demande *par la poste* parce qu'elles ne peuvent se rendre à un bureau local de la Commission de l'emploi et de l'immigration du Canada.

Nous vous encourageons à venir vous-même déposer votre demande. Le bureau local peut vous aider à remplir correctement votre formulaire. Ainsi, vous ne vous exposez pas à voir votre demande retardée si elle vous est retournée pour être corrigée.

Mais souvenez-vous que nous ne pouvons assumer la responsabilité de la sécurité des documents expédiés par la poste. Cependant, nous prendrons toutes les précautions raisonnables pour qu'ils soient retournés à leur expéditeur.

Le contenu du guide

Partie I **Page 4**

Comment demander un nouveau numéro d'assurance sociale par la poste si je n'en ai jamais eu un?

Partie II **Page 6**

Qu'advient-il si je porte actuellement un nom différent de celui qui figure sur mon extrait de naissance (ou sur tout autre document justificatif principal)?

Que dois-je faire pour remplacer ma carte matricule?

Avec qui puis-je communiquer si j'ai besoin d'autres renseignements?

Partie III **Page 8**

Quels documents justificatifs dois-je envoyer avec ma demande NAS?

Comment remplir le formulaire de demande?

Où puis-je me procurer un extrait de naissance, un certificat de citoyenneté ou de résident permanent (immigrant reçu)?

Partie I

Comment demander un numéro d'assurance sociale par la poste si je n'en ai jamais eu un?

Vous devez remplir le formulaire de demande approprié, y joindre les documents nécessaires pour étayer votre preuve d'identité et envoyer le tout dans des enveloppes prévues à cette fin.

Comment remplir vos formulaires

Utiliser un des deux formulaires suivants:

1. *Demande de numéro d'assurance sociale ou de remplacement de carte matricule d'assurance sociale*. Ce formulaire se trouve dans la pochette de documentation. Remplir ce formulaire si vous faites une demande pour la première fois ou si vous avez perdu, égaré ou endommagé votre carte NAS.
2. *Demande de modification des registres d'assurance sociale*. Vous devez vous procurer cette formule au Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre) le plus proche de chez vous. Remplir cette formule si vous désirez modifier les renseignements qui figurent à votre dossier, changer votre nom ou votre date de naissance, par exemple.

Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour remplir l'un de ces formulaires, voir les directives inscrites à la partie III du présent guide (p. 12 ou 14).

Les pièces justificatives dont vous avez besoin

Le NAS intervient dans l'application de grand nombre de programmes publics de soutien du revenu ainsi que dans la gestion du Régime de l'impôt sur le revenu. Pour obtenir votre NAS, il importe que vous présentiez un document attestant votre identité et votre statut de citoyen. Voilà pourquoi il est essentiel de nous envoyer deux documents: l'un principal et l'autre secondaire.

1. *Le document principal* — Il atteste votre identité et votre statut au Canada. Ce doit être un document original ou une copie complète authentifiée par un notaire ou toute autre personne habilitée à faire prêter serment. Les deux côtés du document doivent être copiés et authentifiés s'ils contiennent des renseignements justificatifs.

Le document principal devant accompagner votre demande varie en fonction de votre statut au Canada. Selon qu'ils sont citoyens canadiens, résidents permanents (immigrants reçus) ou autres, les demandeurs doivent envoyer un document principal différent. La partie III du présent guide énumère les documents principaux jugés acceptables (page 8).

Nota:

Le nom que vous portez actuellement diffère peut-être de celui qui figure sur les documents principaux. Si c'est le cas, veuillez lire la partie II pour de plus amples renseignements, (page 6).

2. *Le document secondaire* — Il étaie les renseignements fournis par le document principal. Nous acceptons les photocopies.

Plusieurs sortes de documents secondaires conviennent. Veuillez consulter la liste qui figure à la partie III du présent guide (page 10).

Comment poster votre formulaire et vos documents

Voici comment préparer votre formulaire pour l'envoyer.

1. Prendre l'enveloppe portant le chiffre «2» dans l'angle inférieur gauche.

2. Ecrivez en caractères d'imprimerie votre nom, adresse et code postal sur l'enveloppe, dans l'espace prévu à cette fin. Cette dernière servira à vous retourner vos documents — principal et secondaire.

Nous vous renverrons cette enveloppe par courrier de première classe, mais si vous désirez que les documents originaux vous soient retournés par courrier recommandé, affranchissez suffisamment l'enveloppe de retour pour acquitter la taxe de recommandation.

3. Placer dans l'enveloppe «2»
   - le formulaire de demande rempli;
   - le document principal;
   - le document secondaire; ou l'autre pièce justificative, par exemple, un certificat de mariage (s'il y a lieu).
4. Placer l'enveloppe «2» (non cachetée) dans l'enveloppe «1».
5. Cachetez l'enveloppe «1» et affranchissez-la suffisamment. Si vous envoyez les documents originaux, il est préférable de les expédier par courrier recommandé.

Nota:

Si vos documents sont trop grands pour être insérés dans l'enveloppe «2», vous devrez utiliser vos propres enveloppes. Avez soin, dans ce cas, d'inscrire votre adresse sur l'enveloppe de retour.

Si vous n'avez eu aucun problème à établir votre demande de la façon décrite ci-dessus, vous pourrez vous dispenser de lire la partie II.

Envoyez deux documents d'identité avec votre demande

Partie II

Qu'advient-il si je porte actuellement un nom différent de celui qui figure sur mon extrait de naissance (ou sur tout autre document justificatif principal)?

Dans ce cas, vous devez nous envoyer un (ou les) document(s) secondaire(s) qui vous permettra de prouver la différence entre les deux noms. *N'envoyez pas d'autres sortes de documents secondaires.*

C'est aussi ce que vous devez faire si vous voulez que le nom sur votre carte soit changé.

Envoyer un *original ou une copie authentifiée* de l'un des documents suivants:

1. Changement de nom par mariage

- un certificat de mariage canadien
- un certificat de mariage étranger
  (S'il est rédigé dans une langue autre que le français ou l'anglais, il doit être accompagné d'une traduction française ou anglaise certifiée par le traducteur devant un notaire.)

2. Changement légal de nom

- certificat établi conformément à la loi provinciale sur le changement de nom
- ordonnance d'un tribunal établie conformément à la loi provinciale sur le changement de nom
- certificat ou ordonnance du tribunal établis conformément à tout autre loi analogue

3. Changement de nom par l'usage

Cela se produit quand le nom dont vous vous servez, et sous lequel vous êtes connu depuis longtemps dans votre localité, diffère de celui inscrit sur votre document principal. Dans ce cas, veuillez écrire ou téléphoner au Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre) le plus près de chez vous. Demandez qu'on vous envoie le formulaire de déclaration sous serment.

Après l'avoir rempli, faites-le authentifier par un avocat, un notaire ou toute autre personne habilitée à faire prêter serment.

Postez le formulaire rempli ainsi que votre demande et les autres documents appropriés.

Que dois-je faire pour remplacer ma carte matricule?

Procédez de la manière habituelle, c'est-à-dire comme si vous présentiez une demande pour la première fois. Voir partie I ci-dessus.

Avec qui puis-je communiquer si j'ai besoin d'autres renseignements?

Si vous ne pouvez vous procurer un document principal, secondaire ou tout autre document acceptable, communiquer d'abord avec le Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre).

Les personnes qui reçoivent la Pension de sécurité de la vieillesse ne pouvant se procurer un document principal doivent communiquer avec le bureau régional de la Santé et bien-être social (pension de sécurité de la vieillesse) le plus proche pour demander une lettre pour fin d'identité.

Si vous avez encore besoin d'aide, écrivez au Fichier central de la Commission à l'adresse de retour inscrite sur l'enveloppe «2».

Les agents de la Commission sont pleinement disposés à vous aider. Mais vous devez d'abord faire tous les efforts possibles pour vous procurer les documents nécessaires.

Remplissez le bon formulaire de demande

Le document principal doit être un original ou une copie certifiée

Habituellement, le document secondaire peut être une photocopie

Partie III

Quels documents justificatifs dois-je envoyer avec ma demande NAS?

Liste des documents principaux (originaux ou copies authentifiées seulement) dont vous avez besoin . . .

1) si vous êtes citoyen canadien

Un citoyen canadien est une personne née au Canada ou qui possède un certificat de citoyenneté ou de naturalisation.
Vous avez besoin de *l'un* des documents suivants:

- Extrait de naissance (attribué par une direction de la statistique de l'état civil de votre province ou territoire ou par une autorité qui enregistre les naissances)
- Extrait de baptême si né et baptisé au Québec ou à Terre-Neuve
- Certificate of Dedication (Terre-Neuve seulement)
- Certificat de citoyenneté canadienne
- Certificat de naturalisation
- Certificat d'autochtone
- Certificat de retention de citoyenneté canadienne
- Certificat de naissance à l'étranger
- Un passeport canadien valide (Votre nom tel que montré sur la formule d'application doit être le même que sur le passeport. Si il y a une différence, celle-ci doit être indiquée dans la page d'observation du passeport.)

2) si vous êtes résident permanent (immigrant reçu)

Un résident permanent (immigrant reçu) est une personne qui a été admise légalement au Canada aux fins de résidence permanente, mais qui n'est pas encore naturalisée canadienne.
Vous avez besoin de *l'un* des documents suivants:

- Fiche d'immigration Canada et visa (IMM 1000)
- Renseignements d'après les dossiers d'immigration (M&I 463 ou IMM 2014-2241)
- Permis de voyage canadien
- Carte d'identité canadienne

Nota:
Vous avez peut-être déjà un NAS distinctif commençant par le chiffe «9». Après avoir acquis le statut résident permanent (immigrant reçu) vous voudrez peut-être le remplacer par un NAS ordinaire. Si tel est le cas, inscrivez votre NAS distinctif dans la case 9 du formulaire de demande S-1. Il sera annulé et remplacé par un NAS ordinaire.

Vous devrez aussi savoir . . .

- Une personne peut porter un nom différent de celui qui figure sur les documents principaux susmentionnés. Dans ce cas, la personne présente la preuve de son changement de nom ou s'il s'agit d'une femme, dont le nom a changé lorsqu'elle s'est mariée, son certificat de mariage.
- L'envers du document principal (ou de changement de nom) doit également être copié et authentifié s'il renferme des renseignements justificatifs.
- Le Québec et Terre-Neuve sont les seules provinces où le clergé est officier de l'Etat pour enregistrer et est légalement licencié par statut. Un certificat de baptême

3) si vous êtes ni l'un ni l'autre et...

a) vous faites votre demande au Canada, vous avez besoin de l'un des documents suivants:

- Fiche du visiteur (IMM 1097)
- Permis de travail (IMM 1102)
- Permis de séjour pour étudiant (IMM 1208)
- Permis pour entrer au Canada ou y demeurer (IMM 1263)
- Prorogation de la durée de la validité d'un permis (IMM 1264)
- Manifeste (IMM 60)
- Carte d'identité du ministère des affaires extérieures
- Un passeport étranger portant le visa diplomatique ou de courtoisie
- Extrait de naissance étranger

Nota:

Le NAS distinctif — Si votre demande est acceptée, vous recevrez un numéro d'assurance sociale commençant par le chiffre «9».

Les personnes qui font ce genre de demande ne sont ni citoyens canadiens ni résidents permanents (immigrants reçus) mais:

- *sont de passage au Canada et ont besoin d'un NAS afin de satisfaire à des exigences canadiennes légales ou spéciales; ou*
- *demeurent à l'extérieur du Canada, mais ont un impôt canadien à verser; ou*
- *demeurent à l'extérieur du Canada, mais font des affaires au pays qui demandent un NAS afin de satisfaire aux exigences des autorités provinciales de caractère gouvernemental ou non gouvernemental.*

b) vous faites votre demande de l'extérieur du Canada, vous devrez fournir votre extrait de naissance et *l'un* des documents suivants:

- Une lettre originale provenant d'une administration canadienne (fédérale, provinciale ou municipale) ou de tout autre établissement canadien qui vous a invité à faire une demande de NAS. Si vous n'avez rien de ce qui précède, nous accepterons une lettre dans laquelle vous nous expliquerez pourquoi vous avez besoin d'un NAS.

peut donc être accepté dans ces provinces.

- L'extrait de naissance étranger doit être rédigé en anglais ou en français. S'il est dans une autre langue, il doit être accompagné d'une traduction officielle certifiée par le traducteur devant un notaire. Une traduction certifiée par un représentant officiel du pays d'origine du document est acceptable, à condition qu'elle soit jointe à l'original. Si vous avez de la difficulté à fournir de telles traductions, adressez-vous au bureau d'assurance-chômage de votre localité.

Voici des listes de documents secondaires. Veuillez en choisir un provenant d'une des listes ci-dessous.

Documents administratifs
- Permis de conduire
- Formules d'immigration
- Passeport
- Avis de cotisation ou relevé de taxes de la municipalité

Attestations de l'exercice d'un emploi
- Carte d'identité de salarié
- Laissez-passer officiel
- Lettre de recommandation
- Relevé d'emploi
- Carte de membre de syndicat
- Carte de membre d'une association professionnelle

Dossiers scolaires
- Registres de fréquentation scolaire
- Bulletins scolaires
- Diplômes
- Certificats, grades, etc.

Dossiers religieux
- Certificat de première communion
- Certificat de confirmation
- Autres documents religieux

Dossiers militaires
- Carte d'identité
- Certificat de libération
- Fiche médicale
- Livret de solde

Dossiers médicaux
- Dossier d'hospitalisation portant la signature d'un membre de la direction de l'hôpital
- Autre certificat médical émis par un médecin ou un praticien analogue

Dossiers personnels
- Actes, contrats hypothécaires et autres documents juridiques officiels attestant une transaction immobilière

Dossiers d'assurance
- Polices d'assurance-vie
- Certificats d'assurance-accident ou d'assurance-hospitalisation
- Polices d'assurance sur les biens personnels
- Polices d'assurance hypothécaire
- Polices d'assurance-responsabilité

Dossiers de changement de nom
Voir la page 6.

Vous devrez aussi savoir . . .
- Les documents secondaires doivent porter votre nom et être des originaux, ou des photocopies lisibles et authentiques.
- Le document secondaire ou l'extrait de naissance étranger doit être rédigé en anglais ou en français. S'il est dans une autre langue, il doit être accompagné d'une traduction officielle certifiée par le traducteur devant un notaire. Une traduction certifiée par un représentant officiel du pays d'origine du document est acceptable, à condition qu'elle soit jointe à l'original. Si vous avez de la difficulté à fournir de telles traductions, adressez-vous au bureau local de la Commission de l'emploi et de l'immigration du Canada.

Donnez votre NAS seulement quand vous le jugez nécessaire

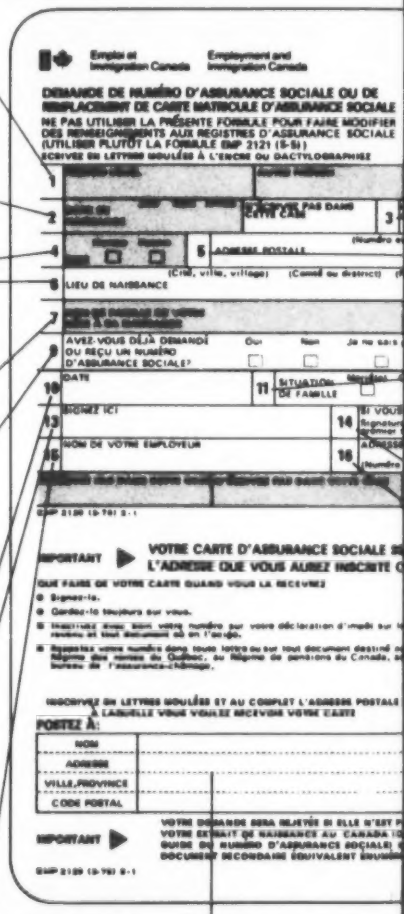
Envoyez les documents originaux par courrier recommandé

Votre nouvel employeur vous demandera votre NAS

Comment remplir le formulaire de demande

Les directives contenues dans ce feuillet vous aideront à remplir les deux formulaires de demande aux pages suivantes. Utiliser le formulaire S-1 pour demander un numéro d'assurance sociale ou faire remplacer votre carte. Si vous désirez faire modifier certains renseignements, le nom qui figure sur les registres d'assurance sociale par exemple, remplissez le formulaire S-5.

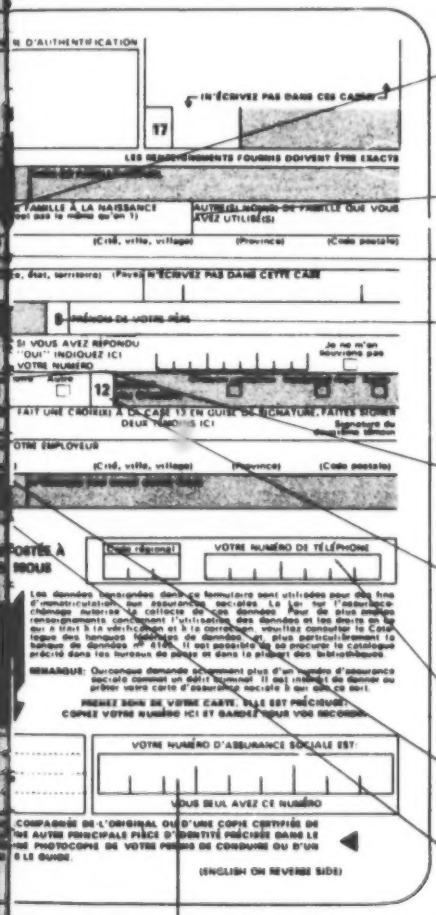
1. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre prénom et votre nom de famille complets. Ne donnez qu'un autre prénom. N'écrivez pas «M.», «Mme», «Mlle» ni aucune autre désignation.
2. Ecrivez en lettres moulées le jour, le mois et l'année de votre naissance.
4. Cochez la case appropriée.
6. Ecrivez en lettres moulées le nom de la cité, de la ville ou du village où vous êtes né et donnez les autres détails exigés, par exemple, votre pays d'origine.
7. Ecrivez le nom de jeune fille de votre mère. Si vous ne le savez pas, écrivez INCONNU.
9. Lisez attentivement le numéro 9 et n'oubliez pas que quiconque demande sciemment plus d'un numéro d'assurance sociale commet une infraction. Tracez un «X» dans la case appropriée et, si vous *avez* déjà un NAS, écrivez ici les 9 chiffres du numéro.
10. Ecrivez en lettres moulées le jour, le mois et l'année de l'établissement de votre demande.
13. Votre demande sera refusée si cette case contient une signature dactylographiée ou écrite en lettres moulées, à moins que vous ne joigniez une note expliquant que c'est votre signature habituelle. Les demandes faites au nom d'une personne de moins de 12 ans doivent être signées par son père, sa mère ou son tuteur, qui doit préciser à la case 14 son lien avec cette dernière.
15. Si vous travaillez au moment où vous faites votre demande, écrivez en lettres moulées le nom de votre employeur (personne ou entreprise).


Emploi et Immigration Canada
Employment and Immigration Canada
DEMANDE DE NUMÉRO D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE OU DE REMPLACEMENT DE CARTE MATRICULE D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE
NE PAS UTILISER LA PRÉSENTE FORMULE POUR FAIRE MODIFIER DES RENSEIGNEMENTS AUX REGISTRES D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE (UTILISER PLUTÔT LA FORMULE EMP 2121 (S-5))
ÉCRIVEZ EN LETTRES MOULÉES À L'ENCRE OU DACTYLOGRAPHIEZ
NE RIEN ÉCRIRE DANS CET ESPACE
ADRESSE POSTALE
(Cité, ville, village)
(Comté ou district)
LIEU DE NAISSANCE
AVEZ-VOUS DÉJÀ DEMANDÉ OU REÇU UN NUMÉRO D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE?
Oui
Non
Je ne sais
DATE
SITUATION DE FAMILLE
SIGNEZ ICI
NOM DE VOTRE EMPLOYEUR
EMP 2120 (S-761 S-1)
IMPORTANT
VOTRE CARTE D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE
L'ADRESSE QUE VOUS AUREZ INSCRITE
QUE FAIRE DE VOTRE CARTE QUAND VOUS LA RECEVREZ
INSCRIVEZ EN LETTRES MOULÉES ET AU COMPLET L'ADRESSE POSTALE À LAQUELLE VOUS VOULEZ RECEVOIR VOTRE CARTE
POSTEZ À:
NOM
ADRESSE
VILLE/PROVINCE
CODE POSTAL
IMPORTANT
EMP 2120 (S-761 S-1)

Cette partie de la formule vous sera retournée avec votre carte matricule d'assurance sociale. Cette adresse est celle que le facteur verra par la fenêtre de l'enveloppe de retour; assurez-vous donc qu'elle est exacte, complète et lisible.

Formulaire EMP 2120 (S-1)

Veuillez utiliser ceci afin d'obtenir ou de remplacer un NAS



3. Si votre nom de famille actuel est différent de ce qu'il était à votre naissance (par suite de mariage, par exemple,), écrivez ici en lettres moulées le nom de famille que vous portiez à votre naissance.

3A. Si, par le passé, vous vous êtes servi d'autres noms de famille que celui en 1 ou en 3, écrivez-les ici.

5. Ecrivez en lettres moulées l'adresse actuelle complète de votre domicile.

8. Ecrivez en lettres moulées le prénom usuel de votre père. Ce renseignement nous aide à vous distinguer des autres demandeurs qui portent le même nom que vous. Ecrivez «INCONNU» si vous ne savez pas son nom.

11. Indiquez votre situation de famille en traçant un «X» dans l'une des cases. Une veuve, un veuf ou une personne divorcée trace un «X» dans la case «autre».

12. Si vous êtes citoyen canadien ou résident permanent (immigrant reçu) tracez un «X» dans la case appropriée. Dans le cas contraire, tracez un «X» dans la case sous «autre».

Indiquez votre numéro de téléphone. Nous pourrons, le cas échéant, vous rejoindre plus vite.

14. Si la signature dans la case 13 est un «X» ou tout autre signe apposé par une personne incapable d'écrire, deux témoins doivent signer ici.

16. Ecrivez l'adresse postale complète de l'employeur dont le nom figure dans la case 15.

N'écrivez rien dans cet espace. Quand vous recevrez votre carte matricule d'assurance sociale, vous pourrez y inscrire le NAS qui figure sur votre carte et garder ainsi note de votre numéro.

Formulaire EMP 2121 S-5

Veuillez utiliser ceci afin de modifier les renseignements dans votre dossier NAS

Partie A: Il faut la remplir au complet

A1. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre nom de famille tel qu'il figure sur votre carte matricule d'assurance sociale.

A2. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre prénom tel qu'il figure sur votre carte matricule d'assurance sociale.

A3. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre autre prénom, si vous en avez un, tel qu'il figure sur votre carte matricule d'assurance sociale.

A4.5.6. Ces cases doivent contenir les mêmes renseignements que ceux fournis sur votre dernière formule de demande S-1 ou S-5. Ces renseignements permettent de vous distinguer des autres demandeurs qui portent le même nom que vous.

A4. Ecrivez le jour, le mois et l'année de votre naissance.

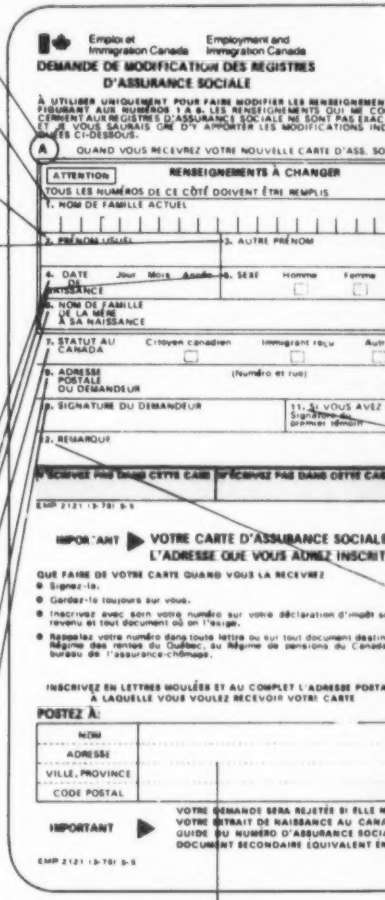
A5. Cochez la case appropriée.

A6. Ecrivez le nom de jeune fille de votre mère. Si vous ne le savez pas écrivez INCONNU.

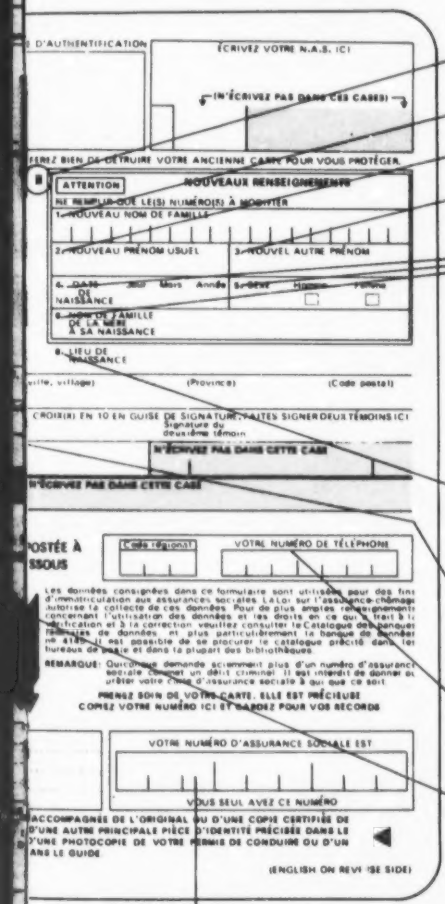
7. Tracez un «X» dans la case appropriée si vous êtes citoyen canadien ou résident permanent (immigrant reçu). Dans les autres cas, tracez un «X» dans la case «autre».

9. Inscrivez en lettres moulées l'adresse actuelle complète de votre domicile.

10. Votre demande sera refusée si cette case contient une signature dactylographiée ou écrite en lettres moulées, à moins que vous ne joigniez une note expliquant que c'est votre signature habituelle. Les demandes faites au nom d'une personne de moins de 12 ans doivent être signées par son père, sa mère ou son tuteur, qui doit préciser à la case 11 son lien avec cette dernière.


Emploi et Immigration Canada
Employment and Immigration Canada
DEMANDE DE MODIFICATION DES REGISTRES D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE
A UTILISER UNIQUEMENT POUR FAIRE MODIFIER LES RENSEIGNEMEN
FIGURANT AUX NUMÉROS 1 A 6. LES RENSEIGNEMENTS QUI NE CO
CERNENT AUX REGISTRES D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE NE SONT PAS ERAC
ET SI VOUS SAURAIS QUE D'Y APPORTER LES MODIFICATIONS IN
ÉES CI-DESSOUS.
A QUAND VOUS RECEVREZ VOTRE NOUVELLE CARTE D'ASS. SO
ATTENTION
RENSEIGNEMENTS À CHANGER
TOUS LES NUMÉROS DE CE CÔTÉ DOIVENT ÊTRE REMPLIS
1. NOM DE FAMILLE ACTUEL
2. PRÉNOM USUEL
3. AUTRE PRÉNOM
4. DATE DE NAISSANCE
Jour Mois Année
5. SEXE
Homme
Femme
6. NOM DE FAMILLE DE LA MÈRE À SA NAISSANCE
7. STATUT AU CANADA
Citoyen canadien
Immigrant reçu
Autre
8. ADRESSE POSTALE DU DEMANDEUR
(Numéro et rue)
9. SIGNATURE DU DEMANDEUR
11. SI VOUS AVEZ
Signature du premier témoin
13. REMARQUE
N'ÉCRIVEZ PAS DANS CETTE CASE
N'ÉCRIVEZ PAS DANS CETTE CAS
EMP 2121 (S-79) S-5
IMPORTANT
VOTRE CARTE D'ASSURANCE SOCIALE
L'ADRESSE QUE VOUS AUREZ INSCRIT
QUE FAIRE DE VOTRE CARTE QUAND VOUS LA RECEVREZ
Signez-la.
Gardez-la toujours sur vous.
Inscrivez avec soin votre numéro sur votre déclaration d'impôt
revenu et tout document où on l'exige.
Rappelez votre numéro dans toute lettre ou sur tout document
Régime des rentes du Québec, au Régime de pensions du Canad
bureau de l'assurance-chômage.
INSCRIVEZ EN LETTRES MOULÉES ET AU COMPLET L'ADRESSE POST
À LAQUELLE VOUS VOULEZ RECEVOIR VOTRE CARTE
POSTEZ À:
NOM
ADRESSE
VILLE, PROVINCE
CODE POSTAL
IMPORTANT
VOTRE DEMANDE SERA REJETÉE SI ELLE
VOTRE EXTRAIT DE NAISSANCE AU CAN
GUIDE OU NUMÉRO D'ASSURANCE SOCI
DOCUMENT SECONDAIRE ÉQUIVALENT É
EMP 2121 (S-79) S-5

Cette partie de la formule vous sera retournée avec votre nouvelle carte matricule d'assurance sociale. Cette adresse est celle que le facteur verra par la fenêtre de l'enveloppe de retour; assurez-vous donc qu'elle est exacte, complète et lisible.



Partie B: N'inscrire que les renseignements à modifier

B1. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre nouveau nom de famille.

B2. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre nouveau prénom.

B3. Ecrivez en lettres moulées votre nouvel autre prénom. Ne donnez qu'un seul autre prénom.

B4.5.6. Ces cases peuvent vous servir à informer le Fichier central d'une erreur dans les renseignements donnés sur une demande antérieure de NAS. Inscrivez les renseignements corrects que vous voulez voir figurer aux registres d'assurance sociale. Les renseignements à inscrire dans la partie A doivent être ceux que vous avez déjà donnés.

8. Ecrivez en lettres moulées le nom de la cité, de la ville ou du village et du pays où vous êtes né. Indiquez ici le numéro d'assurance sociale qui vous a été attribué au départ.

11. Si la signature dans la case 10 est un «X» ou tout autre signe apposé par une personne incapable d'écrire, deux témoins doivent signer ici.

Indiquez votre numéro de téléphone. Nous pourrons ainsi mieux vous aider si nous devons communiquer avec vous.

12. Donnez, dans cet espace, les renseignements expliquant la nature de la modification que vous désirez faire apporter à votre immatriculation.

N'écrivez rien dans cet espace. Quand vous recevrez votre carte matricule d'assurance sociale, vous pourriez y inscrire le NAS qui figure sur votre carte et garder ainsi note de votre numéro.

Où puis-je me procurer un extrait de naissance, un certificat de citoyenneté ou de résident permanent (immigrant reçu)?

Attestation de naissance

Ile-du-Prince-Edouard
Director
Division of Vital Statistics
Department of Health
Box 3000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7P1

Nouvelle-Ecosse
Deputy Registrar General
Joseph Howe Building
P.O. Box 488
Halifax, N.S.
B3J 2R8

Nouveau-Brunswick
Personal Health Services Division
Vital Statistics
Department of Health
Centennial Building
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Ontario
Deputy Registrar
Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations
MacDonald Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Y5

Territoires du Nord-Ouest
Registrar of Vital Statistics
Department of Public Works
Government of Northwest Territories
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2L9

Manitoba
Resources Division
Vital Statistics Branch
Department of Health and Social Development
Room 104,
401 York Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Saskatchewan
Research & Planning Division
Department of Health
Provincial Health Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A9

Alberta
Director of Vital Statistics
Department of Social Services and Community Health
10405 - 100 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0A6

Colombie-Britannique
Public Health Program
Vital Statistics
Ministry of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

Territoire du Yukon
Registrar, Vital Statistics
Department of Health
Government of the Yukon Territory
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Y.T.
Y1A 2C6

Québec
Le Ministre du culte de la paroisse d'enregistrement de la naissance
ou
Le Greffe de la Cour Supérieure du District judiciaire de l'enregistrement

Terre-Neuve
Le Ministre du culte de la paroisse d'enregistrement de la naissance
ou
Registrar
Vital Statistics Division
Department of Health
Confederation Bldg.
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5T7

Inscrivez votre adresse
sur l'enveloppe de retour

Attestation d'immigration et de citoyenneté

Le Centre d'immigration du Canada ou la Cour de la citoyenneté canadienne peut vous aider à vous procurer l'attestation d'immigration ou de citoyenneté requise. Vous trouverez leur adresse et leur numéro de téléphone sous la rubrique «Gouvernement du Canada» dans votre annuaire téléphonique ou dans celui de la grande ville la plus proche. Regardez sous les rubriques «Demande de citoyenneté» ou «Immigration».

Les droits de la personne

Depuis le 1er mars 1978, la Loi canadienne sur les droits de la personne vous permet de consulter votre dossier d'assurance sociale.

Pour savoir comment vérifier et corriger ce dossier, veuillez consulter le numéro 4145 du répertoire de la Banque fédérale des données. Ce répertoire est disponible dans la plupart des bureaux de poste.

La Loi sur l'assurance-chômage nous donne accès aux renseignements contenus dans les demandes de numéro d'assurance sociale. Ces renseignements servent à émettre les numéros d'assurance sociale et à d'autres fins, toutes décrites dans le répertoire.

On travaille ensemble

Dans certaines localités, le Centre de Main-d'œuvre du Canada et le bureau d'assurance-chômage ont fusionné et s'appellent Centre d'emploi du Canada. Un jour, le fusionnement aura eu lieu partout. Entretemps vous verrez les pancartes suivantes: Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage) ou Centre d'emploi du Canada (services de main-d'œuvre).

AVERTISSEMENT

Le présent dépliant n'a pas force de loi. En cas de conflit d'interprétation quelconque, il faut s'en remettre à la Loi et aux Règlements sur l'assurance-chômage.

Demander sciemment plus d'un numéro d'assurance sociale est une infraction à la Loi sur l'assurance-chômage.

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Employment and Immigration Canada | Emploi et Immigration Canada

How do you apply for a Social Insurance Number?

Here's what you do to get your SIN card.

Canada

Applying for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) is easier than you think. All you need to do is get the right identity documents and bring them to your local Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services) and complete an application form there. If you're not sure about the documents you'll need call your local office or centre first.

The rest is up to us. We will mail your SIN card to you.

Where do you apply?

Go to the nearest Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services) with the necessary documents described below.

What is the main document you need?

Bring *one* of these documents (original or certified copy) with you:

1. If you were *born in Canada* but outside *Quebec or Newfoundland*, bring your birth certificate.
2. If you were *born in Quebec*, bring your baptismal or birth certificate.
3. If you were *born in Newfoundland*, bring your birth, baptismal or dedication certificate.
4. If you are a *naturalized Canadian citizen*, bring your citizenship certificate.
5. If you are a *permanent resident (landed immigrant)*, bring the Canadian Immigration Record and Visa (form IMM 1000, the form you got from Immigration when you entered Canada).
6. If you are *neither a citizen nor a permanent resident (landed immigrant)*, bring one of the following:
   - Visitor record (IMM 1097)
   - Employment authorization (IMM 1102)
   - Permit to come into or remain in Canada (IMM 1263)
   - Extension of permit (IMM 1264)

PN. 312/7/79

It's easier to apply in person at your local office.

Remember to bring two identity documents when applying in person.

- Foreign birth certificate (must be translated into English or French)
- Student authorization (IMM 1208)

Note:

An acceptable birth certificate is one issued by the vital statistics branch of the province or territory of your birth, or by a government agency authorized by federal or provincial law to register births.

What other documents do you need?

You must *also* bring *one* other document — something official with your name on it. It confirms your identity. For example:

- Driver's license
- Hospital/medical insurance card
- Senior citizen ID card
- Utility bill
- School record
- Credit card
- Military record
- Membership card

If you cannot get the necessary documents, contact your local Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services).

The people at the local office can suggest other documents you may be able to use.

A different name?

What if the name on your birth certificate (or other main identity document) is different from the name you use now? If you want to be registered in a name that is different from the name on your main document, you may have to prove that the name change is legal. For example, if you want to be registered under your married name, you should bring your marriage certificate.

Applying by mail?

We urge you to apply in person if at all possible. But if you cannot apply in person, you will have to apply by

mail. Write or phone any of our offices and ask them to send you a "mail application kit". When you get the kit, please read the instructions carefully.

The telephone directories of your area list local Canada Employment Centres (Unemployment Insurance or Manpower Services).

But remember, we cannot be responsible for the safety of original documents sent through the mail. However, every reasonable effort will be made to ensure their safe return.

What happens now?

When the local office has the necessary documents and application form, Central Index will process it and a Social Insurance Number card will be mailed to you.

What is the Social Insurance Number?

The SIN is a nine-digit number.

Your employer will ask for your SIN when you start working.

Canadian citizens and permanent residents (landed immigrants) get a regular number. Everyone else gets a distinctive number beginning with the digit "9".

The SIN was first introduced in 1964 to register people for two federal government programs: Unemployment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan. In 1967, it also became a file identifier for federal income tax.

Later, many private businesses and government departments began to use the SIN. Your employer will ask for it when you begin working. Banks often ask for it when you cash a cheque. Health and Welfare Canada asks for it when you apply for family allowances or the child tax credit.

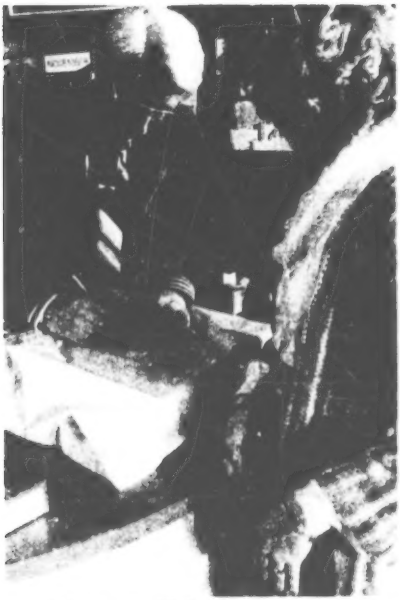
Still, the real purpose of the SIN hasn't changed in all that time. It is to identify you for the administration of government services.

It's up to you

Usually, you are not obliged to disclose your SIN to anyone other than the government. Otherwise it's your decision when to give it. However, there are exceptions: employers will need your SIN when they hire you; banks will need it when you cash bearer bond coupons.

If you are asked for it to get credit or cash a cheque, for example, it's up to you whether you give it. (Just as it's up to you whether you give any other account or credit card number when doing business. Equally, it's also up to the firm you're dealing with to decide whether they want to do business with you if you don't give them your number.)

Be cautious about giving your number to anyone. As with any other personal information, give it only for reasons you think proper.



Give your SIN only for reasons you think proper.

Under federal privacy laws you can see your SIN file.

Your rights under the privacy laws

Under the federal privacy laws which came into effect on March 1, 1978, you have access to your Social Insurance Number file.

For more information about how to see and make corrections to your file, consult the Index of Federal Information Banks available at most post offices. Refer to bank number 4145.

We are authorized by the Unemployment Insurance Act to ask for the information you give on your SIN application. This information is used to issue your SIN. It may also be used for other purposes. These other uses are described in the federal information bank index.

We're working together

Some Canada Manpower Centres and Unemployment Insurance offices have become single offices. They are called Canada Employment Centres. Eventually, everyone will find their Canada Manpower Centre and Unemployment Insurance office together in one place. Meanwhile, you will see signs reading Canada Employment Centre (Unemployment Insurance) or Canada Employment Centre (Manpower Services).

WARNING

This brochure contains general information only. When a question arises, the Unemployment Insurance Act and Regulations must govern.

It is an offence to apply knowingly for more than one Social Insurance Number.

Employment and Immigration Canada
Emploi et Immigration Canada

Emploi et Immigration Canada

Employment and Immigration Canada

Comment demander un numéro d'assurance sociale?

Voici ce qu'il faut faire pour obtenir un NAS

Canada

Obtenir un numéro d'assurance sociale (NAS), c'est plus facile que vous ne le pensez. Il suffit de vous procurer les documents nécessaires, d'apporter le tout au Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre) et d'y remplir un formulaire.

Si vous ne savez pas exactement quels documents vous sont nécessaires, veuillez communiquer avec le bureau où vous irez faire votre demande.

Une fois votre demande présentée, nous nous occuperons du reste et vous posterons la carte portant votre NAS.

Où déposer sa demande?

Au Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre) le plus proche de chez vous.

Le document principal

Apporter *un* des documents (originaux ou authentifiés) suivants:

1. Si vous êtes *né au Canada* mais *à l'extérieur du Québec ou de Terre-Neuve*, présentez votre extrait de naissance.
2. Si vous êtes *né au Québec*, apportez votre extrait de naissance ou de baptême.
3. Si vous êtes *né à Terre-Neuve*, apportez votre extrait de naissance ou de baptême (Certificate of Dedication).
4. Si vous êtes citoyen *canadien naturalisé*, apportez votre certificat de citoyenneté.
5. Si vous êtes *résident permanent (immigrant reçu)*, apporter la fiche d'immigration Canada et visa (formulaire IMM 1000). Le centre d'immigration vous a remis ce formulaire, lorsque vous êtes entré au Canada.
6. Si vous n'êtes *ni citoyen canadien ni résident permanent (immigrant reçu)*, apportez l'un des documents suivants:

PN. 312/7/79

Il est plus facile de venir vous même déposer votre demande.

N'oubliez pas d'apporter deux documents d'identité au bureau local.

- Fiche du visiteur (IMM 1097)
- Permis de travail (IMM 1102)
- Permis de séjour pour étudiant (IMM 1208)
- Permis pour entrer au Canada ou y demeurer (IMM 1263)
- Prorogation de la durée de la validité d'un permis (IMM 1264)
- Extrait de naissance étranger (traduit en français ou anglais)

Note:

Seuls sont valables les extraits de naissance émis soit par le service des Statistiques démographiques de la province ou territoire où vous êtes né, soit par l'organisme gouvernemental chargé de le faire en vertu d'une loi provinciale ou fédérale.

Quels autres documents vous faut-il?

A l'appui de votre preuve d'identité, vous devez également présenter *un autre* document officiel qui porte votre nom. Par exemple:

- Permis de conduire
- Carte d'assurance-maladie/ d'hospitalisation
- Carte d'identité: âge d'or
- Facture d'une entreprise de service public
- Dossier scolaire
- Carte de crédit
- Dossier militaire
- Carte de membre

Si vous ne pouvez pas obtenir le document principal ou secondaire, communiquez avec le Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre).

Le personnel du bureau local que vous contacterez peut vous suggérer d'autres documents qu'il vous sera possible d'utiliser.

Un nom différent?

Qu'advient-il si vous portez actuellement un nom différent de celui qui figure sur les documents principaux?

Si vous désirez être inscrit sous un nom différent de celui qui figure sur votre document principal, vous devez présenter la preuve de votre changement de nom. C'est en particulier le cas de toute femme qui se marie et désire prendre le nom de son époux; celle-ci doit alors fournir l'original de son certificat de mariage.

Comment faire votre demande par la poste?

Il est préférable de présenter la demande en personne. Nous vous encourageons à venir vous-même déposer votre demande à un de nos bureaux. Cependant, si vous ne pouvez vous rendre à un bureau local, envoyez votre demande par la poste. D'abord, écrivez ou téléphonez à un de nos bureaux pour demander aux préposés de vous poster un formulaire de demande. Lorsque vous recevrez la pochette de documentation, veuillez lire attentivement les directives qui s'y trouvent.

La liste des Centres d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage ou services de main-d'œuvre) figure dans l'annuaire téléphonique de votre région.

Mais souvenez-vous que nous ne pouvons assumer la responsabilité de la sécurité des documents originaux expédiés par la poste, mais nous prendrons toutes les précautions raisonnables pour qu'ils soient renvoyés à leur expéditeur.

Qu'arrive-t-il maintenant?

Lorsque le bureau local aura les documents nécessaires et la formule de demande, une carte NAS vous parviendra par la poste directement du Fichier central.

Qu'est-ce que le numéro d'assurance sociale?

Le NAS est un numéro composé de neuf chiffres. L'on attribue un numéro ordinaire aux citoyens canadiens et

aux résidents permanents (immigrants reçus). Toutes les autres personnes se voient attribuer un numéro distinctif commençant par le chiffre «9».

Le programme a été mis sur pied en 1964 dans le dessein d'immatriculer les personnes à deux programmes fédéraux: l'assurance-chômage et le Régime de pensions du Canada. Depuis 1967, le ministère du Revenu fédéral s'en sert également à des fins d'identification.

Par la suite, un grand nombre d'entreprises privées et de ministères ont commencé à utiliser le NAS. Votre employeur vous le demandera lorsque vous commencerez à travailler, de même que les banques lorsque vous encaisserez un chèque ou le ministère de la Santé nationale et du Bien-être social lorsque vous demanderez des allocations familiales ou le crédit d'impôt remboursable pour enfants. Certains gouvernements provinciaux le demandent pour enregistrer une naissance.

Cependant, le but premier du NAS, vous faciliter l'accès aux services gouvernementaux, n'a jamais été modifié.

Il n'en tient qu'à vous

En général, vous n'avez à révéler votre NAS qu'aux représentants officiels de l'Etat. Toutefois, les employeurs qui l'exigent au moment de vous embaucher ou les banques qui en font autant lorsque vous encaissez des obligations d'épargnes du Canada, se classent parmi les exceptions.

Si l'on vous le demande pour obtenir une carte de crédit ou encaisser un chèque, par exemple, vous n'êtes pas tenu de le donner. (Il en est de même dans le cas d'autres numéros de comptes ou de cartes de crédit. Cependant, l'entreprise concernée a elle aussi la possibilité de refuser de faire

Votre employeur demandera votre NAS au moment de vous embaucher.

Ne donnez votre NAS que lorsque vous le jugez nécessaire.

affaire avec vous si vous ne lui donnez pas votre numéro.)

Ne révélez pas votre numéro à n'importe qui.

A l'instar de tout autre renseignement personnel, ne le donnez que lorsque vous le jugez nécessaire.

Les droits de la personne

Depuis le 1er mars 1978, la Loi canadienne sur les droits de la personne vous permet de consulter votre dossier d'assurance sociale.

Pour savoir comment vérifier et corriger ce dossier, veuillez consulter le numéro 4145 du répertoire de la Banque fédérale des données. Ce répertoire est disponible dans la plupart des bureaux de poste.

La Loi sur l'assurance-chômage nous donne accès aux renseignements contenus dans les demandes de numéro d'assurance sociale. Ces renseignements servent à émettre les numéros d'assurance sociale et à d'autres fins, toutes décrites dans le répertoire.

On travaille ensemble

Dans certaines localités, le Centre de Main-d'œuvre du Canada et le Bureau d'assurance-chômage ont fusionné et s'appellent Centre d'emploi du Canada. Un jour, le fusionnement aura eu lieu partout. Entre-temps vous verrez les pancartes suivantes: Centre d'emploi du Canada (assurance-chômage) ou Centre d'emploi du Canada (services de main-d'œuvre).

AVERTISSEMENT

Le présent dépliant n'a pas force de loi. En cas de conflit d'interprétation quelconque, il faut s'en remettre à la Loi et aux Règlements sur l'assurance-chômage.

Demander sciemment plus d'un numéro d'assurance sociale est une infraction à la Loi sur l'assurance-chômage.

Emploi et Immigration Canada
Employment and Immigration Canada